PONSONBY.

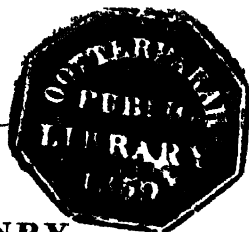
Fuggi 'l sereno e 'l verde;
Non t'appressar ove sia riso e canto,
Canzon mia no, ma pianto:
Non fa per te di star fra gente allegra,
Vedova sconsolata in veste negra.

Il Petrarca.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PONSONBY.

CHAPTER XII.

But I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no musick.
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whilst they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore are they very dangerous.

SHAKSPEARE.

After a prosperous voyage, Arundel landed on the Italian shores. Pisa is

on the Arno, at the distance of four miles from the sea. When he arrived there, he went to the Palace d'Orsino, and delivered his friend's letter, with a card on which he wrote his name and direction. The Count d'Orsino was one of the most opulent noblemen in Italy. He had an only child, the young Countess Isabella. She was seventeen years of age, extremely pretty, with an innocent simplicity of manner that rendered her very engaging. She had many admirers; some whom her charms, and others whom her fortune attracted; for it was well known that she was a great heiress. Her father loved her with the fondest affection; and, as money could be no object to one who had so large a fortune, he resolved to let her consult her own inclinations in the choice of a husband;

and, provided he were of noble family, and of good character, he told her he would make no objections to any one she might propose to him as a son-in-law. During the last year, her most constant attendant had been Count Ferdinando d'Alfieri, a young man of noble birth, whose father had left him but a small fortune, which he had spent; and he now hoped, by pursuing her with unremitted attention, to obtain the hand of the young Isabella. As yet he had not been very successful in his endeavours to make himself agreeable to her; although he had recommendations of mind and person. His features were regularly handsome; his figure tall and majestic; his complexion sallow; his eyes black and piercing, with thick dark eye-brows,

and long eye-lashes. Sometimes there was a look of scornful fierceness, at other times of arch cunning, in his countenance, that was almost terrific: at all times it was serious and melancholy. He never laughed, and seldom smiled; unless when a sneer of contempt lighted up his features. There was so much reserve in his character, that, although he associated with young men of his own age, no one was intimately acquainted with him. He was known to have distressed himself by his extravagance; but he never spoke either of the past events of his life, or of his future views; and no one dared to question him about his own concerns. He had many companions, over whom his superior understanding gave him entire

command; but no man could ever call him his *friend*. His talents were of the most distinguished kind. He had devoted many hours to study, even at the time he had given himself up to dissipation and extravagance; and was thoroughly acquainted with many languages, and several branches of science. Yet, notwithstanding his accomplishments, for a length of time the Countess Isabella had viewed him with no favorable eyes. She could not account for the impression she had taken; but there was a darkness in his character, that excited in her an involuntary distrust and fear of him. He perceived it; and omitted nothing that could tend to remove her prepossession. He had now in great measure succeeded; and, as he ob-

served the change in her manner, the cordiality with which she received him, and the pleasure with which she seemed to converse with him, he flattered himself that the time might not be far distant, when he should awaken in her breast a stronger feeling of partiality.

The day after Arundel had delivered his letter, he received an invitation to dine with the Count d'Orsino. He was much pleased with the gracious and hospitable reception he met with; and, after the count had conversed some time with him, he offered him apartments in the Palace d'Orsino, while he remained at Pisa. This offer he willingly accepted; and the count then introduced him to his daughter. At dinner he found himself seated

near her; and, as he spoke Italian fluently, they soon entered into conversation. The young countess was very much pleased with his vivacity, which was much more agreeable to her than the serious manners of the Italians. There was a youthful gaiety in her disposition, that prevented her disguising her feelings of pleasure or pain; and it was evident to all who saw her, that she was very much delighted with her English acquaintance, and conversed with an unusual flow of spirits. The Count d'Alfieri sat opposite to them; and looked at Arundel with a jealous eye, as he was talking to Isabella with the ease of an old acquaintance.—"Who is that gentleman?" said Arundel to her, as he perceived the dark eyes of Alfieri

fixed stedfastly upon him.—" He is the Count d'Alfieri, who lives a great deal with us. After dinner I will introduce him to you."—" His appearance is not very attractive. He is handsome; but his countenance is one of the most singular and unpleasing I ever saw."

" I used to think so," answered Isabella; " but since we have conversed much together, it no longer strikes me in that light. He is very much looked up to as a man of talents; and his acquaintance is sought by all foreigners who come here; but he is so reserved, it is not easy to become acquainted with him."

After dinner was over, Arundel was introduced to him; and they conversed together for some time. Alfieri had

heard the count invite him to take up his abode at the palace; and he wished to ascertain whether he were likely to find in him a dangerous rival. He was remarkable for a quick penetration into character; and after he had conversed for an hour with Arundel, and had tried him upon various subjects, he appretiated his understanding at its just value. Arundel was a very vain man; and, like most people of that description, he pretended to a degree of information he was conscious he did not possess. Thus, with the assistance of an easy flow of words, he dazzled those who were as ignorant as himself. People who are themselves uninformed upon a subject, will frequently mistake words for ideas, and presumption for knowledge. But, in

the present instance, he was convers-ing with a man whom he could not deceive. From all he had heard of the count, he was anxious to make a favorable impression upon him; and his vanity betrayed him into convers-ing upon subjects, with which he was almost wholly unacquainted. There-fore, every word he uttered, convinced Alfieri he was speaking of what he did not understand; and he despised him, not for his ignorance, but for his af-fectation of knowledge. Yet he by no means considered him as a despicable rival. He thought him a very hand-some man; and he had observed, as he conversed with Isabella, that his manner was particularly insinuating. He was too wise not to be aware that his own was very much the reverse. To

some women his cynical gravity might not have been uninteresting; but to the youthful age and gay disposition of Isabella, it was peculiarly unsuited. He frequently observed, when he entered upon serious subjects, which was the only style of conversation in which he excelled, that she appeared uninterested, and her eyes wandered to some gayer party in the room. Then, if he attempted to amuse her with the light trifling, which seemed best suited to her age and understanding, he soon found he had nothing to say, and was obliged to let the conversation drop. He therefore envied Arundel's playful vivacity; and when he considered how much opportunity a residence in the palace would give him of ingratiating

himself with Isabella, he beheld him with very unpleasant feelings. Mr. Arundel was much flattered by the attention he shewed him, which he mistook for kindness and prepossession. The count determined he would not lose sight of him; but that he would watch narrowly his actions, and the progress he made in Isabella's favour; and not suffer himself to be foiled in his schemes, by one whose understanding he justly considered very inferior to his own. Before they parted, therefore, he informed Arundel where he lived; and expressed a wish that he would call upon him, and allow him to cultivate so agreeable an acquaintance. Arundel, delighted with this courtesy, willingly promised

to visit him the following day. Alfieri then left him, and went to the Countess Isabella.

"I have seen you a long time in conversation with Mr. Arundel," said she, "and I hope you are as much pleased with him as I am."

"I will not answer for that," replied Alfieri; "for I am not apt to take such violent fancies to people I am scarcely acquainted with. From the intimate manner in which you conversed together, I should have supposed you had known one another for years. I never saw two people appear so much pleased with each other, after half an hour's acquaintance."

"Oh! I am delighted with him," said Isabella, artlessly. "I don't

know when I have seen a person I liked so well upon first acquaintance. He has none of the reserve of his countrymen, or of mine, which is so disagreeable, till one has been acquainted with them some time. His manners are more like those of a Frenchman; and I immediately felt at my ease with him. But you look as if you were displeased. Do not you like him? I saw him talking to you a long time."

"If merit consist in talking, his, undoubtedly, is very great; for his words are as numerous as they are unmeaning."

"How severe you are! For my own part, I thought all he said very amusing, and very much to the purpose."

"May I ask," said Alfieri sarcas-

tically, "what he said that pleased you so much?"

"Oh! I thought his conversation very entertaining at the time; but it won't do to be repeated."

"I should suppose not, indeed, from the judgment I am able to form of it."

"Well, you need not criticise him; for you will not persuade me to dislike him. I believe you are half inclined to be jealous of him."

As she unconsciously named the cause of his prepossession against Arundel, his countenance assumed a darker hue; and an expression of suppressed rage might easily be discerned there; but Isabella's eyes were turned towards Arundel as he approached her, and Alfieri walked away. He had long resolved that no power should induce

him to give up his pursuit of one, who could raise him from poverty to a state of luxurious opulence. This was no common object, to be pursued and abandoned according to circumstances. It was one which had engrossed his thoughts for the last year. The infantine simplicity of her manners pleased him; but, had she not possessed a large fortune, he would not have thought of her in a serious light. Now, his ambition, his pride, his jealousy, all conspired in urging him to take any step, rather than suffer himself to be supplanted. Ruminating upon this, he left the palace at an early hour; and retired to his own house.

Arundel continued in conversation with Isabella during the remainder of the evening. "I am much pleased;"

said he, "with the Count d'Alfieri. He has none of the conceit and pedantry of a man of learning; and we conversed very pleasantly together. He seems anxious that we should be better acquainted. I believe he has taken a fancy to me, which I consider as a great compliment from a person of so reserved a disposition." Isabella could not refrain from smiling, when she remembered the contemptuous manner in which Alfieri had spoken of him. However, she assented to his remark, as she had no inclination to say any thing that could make him dissatisfied with himself. Had she wished it, she would not have found it very easy; for it was the natural bent of his mind, to think he was pleasing to every one. In the present instance, he had some reason to do so

as Alfieri, to accomplish his own views, had taken all possible pains to throw aside the constrained manner that was habitual to him, and to assume an appearance of courteous civility.

When the party broke up, Arundel retired to the apartment prepared for him, very much pleased with Isabella. He saw she was equally so with him; and, as he had been told she was to inherit a large fortune, he regretted that he was not at liberty to offer his hand to her. "Yet," thought he, "no one here is acquainted with my history. No one need know that I have a wife."

A vague hope, which he scarcely owned to himself, rose in his mind, that, if he could keep the Count d'Orsino and his daughter ignorant of his marriage, he might possibly not find this an obstacle. He thought, if he

could engage the affections of Isabella, the count might be induced to overlook his being a foreigner and a protestant. His vanity left him little doubt that he should be able to do so; and he went to sleep, thinking over his unprincipled schemes.

The next day Arundel visited the Count d'Alfieri, who received him with great politeness. He endeavoured to draw him into conversation upon the subject of the Countess Isabella. Arundel was of a very open and unreserved temper, except where his interest prompted him to concealment. He was not aware that the count was an admirer of Isabella, for there was no appearance of it in his manner, which was serious and reserved; and he had left them in con-

versation together, without shewing any wish to join in it. Arundel was not sorry, therefore, to have an opportunity of expressing his admiration of her, in the hope that it might reach her ears; and he told him he had never seen a person he thought so pleasing. "You are of course aware that she has very great expectations from her father. He is one of the richest men in this part of the world." —"So I have been informed," answered Arundel; "and, with her personal charms, which are so superior, she is indeed a valuable prize."—"And one, perhaps, you would not be sorry to possess yourself of?" said the wily Italian.—"Oh, I have not presumption enough to aspire so high."—"Yet, now you are established in the

palace, you will have many opportunities of seeing her."—"Certainly," answered Arundel; "and you may depend I shall not neglect them. If I thought I had a chance of being agreeable to her," continued he, with affected modesty, "I should consider myself a most fortunate man." Here the conversation took another turn; and Arundel soon informed him that he had an engagement with Isabella. He went away, and left Alfieri a prey to rage and jealousy. He was entirely ignorant of the tie that bound Arundel in England; and, though he affected to distrust his powers of pleasing, Alfieri saw clearly that he thought them irresistible; and that he would exert them to the utmost, to engage the heart of Isabella. He knew how

strong was her father's affection for her, and how powerful was her influence over him. Could Arundel, then, succeed in gaining her heart, he had little doubt that no other obstacles to his marriage would be insurmountable. Then, all his own views might be frustrated; and the schemes he had carried on for months with unremitting perseverance, might be baffled by the unexpected arrival of a foreigner, just as he began to promise himself success. These thoughts worked up the fierce mind of the Italian to a state of frenzy. He resolved to observe Arundel with jealous attention; and to be directed in his conduct by circumstances.

During a month he followed this plan. The better to disguise his real sentiments, he affected to be pleased

with Arundel, and to court his friendship. He knew enough of the human heart to feel certain, that, if Isabella were attached to Arundel, nothing he could say against him would alter her sentiments; and, if she were not, it was unnecessary to attempt it. Therefore, when she spoke to him of Arundel, he told her he had been too precipitate in the judgment he had given of him the first day they were introduced to each other. "You know," continued he, "I am too much inclined to take unfavorable impressions of those I am little acquainted with; and, certainly, Mr. Arundel is an instance of it; for I now like him particularly, and we are grown quite intimate."

"I am delighted to find," said Isa-

bella, "that we agree in our opinion of him. I liked him from the first moment I saw him; and every day I like him better."

Alfieri smiled; but it was a ghastly smile; more expressive of dark cunning, than of pleasure.

Arundel could not entirely lose the unpleasant impression which the countenance of Alfieri made upon him, when he saw him for the first time. He could not but feel his inferiority to him in understanding and talents; and this gave him a sensation of awe and constraint in his presence, when he met him in company with others. But when they were alone, Alfieri so insinuated himself into his confidence, that, with the foolish presumption remarkable in his character, he laid open

to him all his hopes. One day when he called at his house, he proposed to Alfieri to visit with him the Church of San Paolo; which, from the beauty of its architecture, was an object of curiosity to all strangers. Arundel had no taste for buildings; but he wished to do as others did; and he knew he could not have a better guide than Alfieri. The count agreed to his proposal; and added, that he frequently visited the Church of San Paolo by moonlight, at which time it was seen to the greatest advantage.—"I will therefore," continued he, "call for you late in the evening." This being settled, they talked, as usual, of Isabella. "What progress have you made in obtaining her favour?" said Alfieri, in a tone of easy indifference.

"Oh!" answered Arundel, "I have now no doubt that I shall succeed with her, for she shews me the most marked preference; but I am not without fears that her father may object to our union. However, our perseverance will, I hope, overcome all obstacles." As he said this, he cast his eyes carelessly upon Alfieri; but he had not sufficient penetration to discern the workings of the Italian's dark mind. He then reminded him of his promise to call for him in the evening, and went away.

"Let me perish body and soul," exclaimed Alfieri, stamping his foot with fury upon the ground, "if I suffer that vile, that despicable Englishman, to blast all my prospects!" He then revolved in his mind what steps he should take to frustrate Arundel's

expectations. There was but one way of doing so; and his resolution was soon irrevocably fixed.

In the mean time Arundel returned to the Palace d'Orsino, filled with ideas of future grandeur and opulence. At first he had some scruples of endeavouring to obtain the hand of one, whom he could not lawfully marry. But he was so unaccustomed to control his desires, so entirely devoid of principle or feeling, that he soon hardened himself against all reproaches of conscience; and no longer hesitated to accomplish his marriage with Isabella by the grossest deception. He knew it was more than probable that she would find out in time she had married one, whose wife was still alive; but the deed would then be

done; and he resolved that no remote consideration of future discovery, should deter him from effecting his design, if practicable. In this frame of mind he rejoined Isabella; who was impatiently expecting his return.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ahi Pisa, vituperio delle genti
Del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona;
Poichè i vicini a te punir son lenti,
Muovasi la Capraja e la Gorgona,
E facciau siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
Sì ch'egli annieghi in te ogni persona.

DANTE.

LATE in the evening Alfieri went to the Palace d'Orsino; but Arundel had left it ten minutes before his arrival. He had been called away by a gentleman who was going to embark immediately for England, and with whom he had some business to transact. Thinking Alfieri might call before his return, he had left a message with

Isabella to desire he would wait for him, as he should not be absent more than a quarter of an hour. When she delivered it, Alfieri said he had letters of importance to write, which he had put off, being unwilling to break his engagement with Mr. Arundel; but as he had not met with him, he could not wait for his return, and must go home immediately. Isabella pressed him very much to stay, which he declined; and went away, promising to return as soon as he had written his letters.

As he walked from the palace, he looked on every side for Arundel, whom he soon perceived hastening towards him.

"My dear count," said he, taking his arm, "I beg your pardon for having made you wait; but some un-

expected business obliged me to leave the palace before you arrived."

"It is of no consequence," answered Alfieri; "I was not in a hurry, and only came out to look for you. The church we are going to visit, is by far the finest building in Pisa. I have spent many hours in examining it."

They walked along for some time without speaking. The stillness and beauty of the night disposed them to silence. There was not a breath of air; and the moon had risen in full and resplendent lustre. "What a beautiful moon!" said Arundel, as he cast up his eyes to the clear expanse of air above him, and beheld her shining in awful majesty.—"It is indeed a lovely night!" Alfieri sighed as he spoke. "You have no nights like these in England." He then relapsed

into silence; and nothing more was said till they reached the church.

They entered it. The spectacle was awful and sublime. An air of melancholy grandeur hung over the massy building. The silence which now reigned throughout this mansion of the dead, the uncertain light of the moon that shewed every object indistinctly, the loftiness of the arches, the darkness of the long narrow aisles that seemed to stretch in interminable length, awoke sensations of awe in the breast of Arundel. Monuments of death surrounded him. Those whose ashes they contained, had once, like him, their plans, their hopes, their fears; and now they slept in dull, senseless repose. He shuddered as he thought, that he, too, must one day lie down, and be forgotten. "How

dismal is the thought of death!" said he to Alfieri, who, lost in profound silence, spoke not a word. He cast his eyes upon him as he uttered this. At that moment the moon threw her rays full on the face of Alfieri. They fell upon the countenance of a dæmon! All the prepossessions Arundel had formerly entertained against him returned with redoubled force, as he beheld the dark wildness of his eye; the livid hue that overspread his face; the sarcastic sneer that played around his mouth, and struggled to disguise an expression of rage, which yet was but too visible. He trembled, and dared not speak to him. He remembered the crimes he had committed—those he now meditated. This seemed an hour marked out for deeds of death. Perhaps the punishment of all the pain he

had inflicted upon one, who loved him like her own soul, was now about to overtake him, and hung but by a thread! But when he considered that Alfieri had always shewn him a friendly preference, that he had never offended him, and therefore he could have no motive to work his destruction, he treated his fears as the effect of the melancholy impression which the scene before him made upon his mind, and endeavoured to chase them away. Yet —they returned.

As he looked to the north side of the building, he observed a form gliding through one of the arches. It made its way along the aisle, and he perceived, by the light of the moon, the figure was that of a Dominican monk, who was leaving the church. As he heard the distant sound of his

footsteps that bore him from them, almost he was tempted to call him back; but shame and the indistinctness of his fears withheld him. The sound grew fainter and fainter; and, when he closed the iron door which led out of that side of the building, a sullen echo reverberated through the whole body of the church. It struck mournfully upon the ear of Arundel. He felt as if he were now shut in for destruction. He heard the sound of the clock in the Monastery of San Stefano, which was near the church. It seemed to toll out his last hour—to warn him that he should prepare for death. "Let us leave this place," said he hastily, unable any longer to master the terror which had taken full possession of his mind; "I have seen enough."—"What disturbs you?" ex-

claimed Alfieri, in a tone of contemptuous sarcasm. "Are you afraid of the monk's footsteps, or of your own? Truly, they are very terrific!"—"Why should you think I am frightened?" answered Arundel, in a faltering voice. "What can I fear?" As he said this, he turned round as if he were preparing to leave the church. "Fear this!" cried Alfieri furiously, as he buried his stiletto in Arundel's neck. It was a firm, certain aim. Arundel fell—groaned convulsively—and expired. The blood flowed from the deep gash; and, as it spouted out, some drops fell upon the hand of Alfieri, who examined the wound to see that it was mortal. He looked upon Arundel whom he had murdered—but there was no pity in his countenance. A malicious sneer

of triumph lighted up his savage eye: and he hastened from the church to escape detection.

Lie there, Arundel! a heart more hard, more callous, never beat in human breast! Now thou art sent to answer for thy crimes. What wilt thou say? Thou hast shed no blood—but will not the burning tears, the sleepless nights, and restless days of her, who sued to thee for mercy and compassion, rise up in dreadful judgment against thee? Alfieri has murdered thee, his enemy; his rival;—but thou hast wounded a dear friend, who leaned upon thy bosom for pity and protection. Now thou art gone where the fashion, the custom, the opinion of the world, will avail thee nothing. Stripped of all the glare and glitter of vice, the naked deformity of thy heart is there

revealed. I pity thee—for thou art lost indeed!

Alfieri went home to cleanse from his hands the signs of blood and murder. No one had met them as they walked to the church, which was situated in a solitary part of the town; and the lateness of the hour, as he returned, secured him, in some degree, from observation. A few persons passed him as he walked along; but no one noticed him. With nerves unshaken, he went from thence to the Palace d'Orsino. When he arrived, he seemed much surprised at not finding Arundel there; and expressed some displeasure at his want of punctuality in keeping his engagement. He then entered into conversation with Isabella; and affected an exhilaration of spirits very unnatural to

his character. She was surprised at the unusual animation of his manner; and thought she had never seen him so agreeable.

The next morning a report was spread abroad, that the body of a man recently murdered had been found in the church of San Paolo. A servant of the Count d'Orsino was passing by, as the body was conveyed to the Monastery of San Stefano; and, notwithstanding the marks of violence that disfigured the face, and the congealed blood with which it was covered, he soon recognised the features of Arundel. He carried the news of his murder to the palace, where it excited much consternation. The count could form no conjecture who was the assassin. Alfieri was not suspected, as it was well known that

he had spent the greater part of the evening with Isabella, expecting him. Besides, though little was known of his character, there was no ground to suppose him capable of so black a deed. Arundel's vanity had blinded him very much to the degree of Isabella's partiality for him. It was true that he amused her, and that she was very much pleased with him; but the tears she shed when she heard of his end, were rather those of terror, than of grief. She was shocked to think that one, with whom she had been laughing and talking but a few hours before, was found murdered. The volatility and childishness of her character would not permit her to dwell long upon his memory. For some time she spoke of him with regret; and afterwards, by degrees, she

almost forgot she had ever seen him; except when the mention of murder recalled his to her mind. No suspicion that Alfieri was his murderer ever entered her breast; nor could she have imagined that one, with whom she was in the daily habit of conversing upon the most trifling, indifferent topics, had steeped his hands in blood.

There are some instances of persons, who, after the commission of crimes, have been urged, by the tortures of remorse, to reveal them; but there are numerous instances of men, who have lived and died with unrepented crimes upon their head. Sorrow for the discovery of a crime is frequently mistaken for sorrow at the commission of it; and many have shewn signs of remorse, when their guilt has been re-

vealed, who, had they escaped detection, would have succeeded in quieting the reproaches of conscience. If the darkness of Alfieri's character, and his connexion with Arundel, excited a transient thought in the minds of some, that he was his assassin, they cared not to investigate the matter. It was the business of nobody; and no one attempted to bring the truth to light, which remained wrapt in impenetrable darkness. Therefore, seeing the suspicion against him, if any, was of the slightest kind, he satisfied himself with the idea, that the provocation he had received from Arundel demanded the most severe vengeance. He determined to absent himself from Pisa while the murder was still a subject of conversation; and he went to Rome. But he soon found he did not reap the

fruits he had expected from his crime. During his absence, the Count d'Orsino and his daughter went to Venice; and; soon after they were gone, the news of her marriage with a French nobleman reached Alfieri. His rage was unbounded, when he found that she, for whose sake he had loaded his soul with the blackest guilt, was the wife of another, and could never be his. There was no alternative but to submit to poverty and dependence, since all his hopes of fortune were frustrated. He continued to live at the tables of those whom he courted, and inwardly despised; and to be admired for his talents, while he was feared and disliked for the gloomy sullenness of his character. When the Count d'Orsino returned with his

daughter and son-in-law to Pisa, he resumed his accustomed visits at the palace. If the count had any suspicion that Alfieri had been concerned in the murder of Arundel, he never expressed it to any one; and, as he could not discover the truth, he seemed anxious to bury the whole in oblivion.

Various reports reached England respecting Arundel's death. Some said he had been killed in a duel; others, that he had been found dead, and that it was supposed a sudden seizure had occasioned his death. It was likewise rumoured that a vague suspicion he had been murdered, prevailed at Pisa. The truth could not be ascertained; and after it had been mentioned, with the other news of the

day, that "Arundel, who was parted from his wife, had died lately at Pisa," he was thought of no more.

Yet there was one, who felt a bitter pang when she heard that he was dead; one, whom he had loaded with the deepest injury; who yet forgave him, and mourned for him. Julia heard of his death—she remembered his former kindness; she forgot his recent cruelty, his neglect, his hardness, his violence, when she thought that he had ceased to exist in that world, where she still lingered. Every tie may be rent asunder—but there are recollections that will not pass away.

CHAPTER XIV.

O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
That the sense aches at thee,—Would, thou hadst ne'er been born!

SHAKSPEARE.

THE acquaintance between Lady Matilda Sydney and Henry, which had begun at Mr. Arundel's house, rapidly increased into an intimacy; and Henry soon attached himself to her with all the ardour of his disposition. He was related to many of the first families in England; and his personal recommendations made him acceptable in all societies. It became the fashion to be delighted with him; and no one was more sought

after by every description of persons in London. Lady Matilda felt, therefore, very proud of the devoted attention he shewed her; and left no art unemployed to engage his affections. This she found a very easy task. From the moment Henry was introduced to her, he thought he had never beheld so fascinating a being; and he loved her with the enthusiasm of a first attachment. Till he came to London, he had led a retired life in the country, or at Cambridge; and had never been thrown into the society of women. All the ideas he had formed of their charms, and powers of fascination, originated either in his own imagination, or in the descriptions he had read in the works of poets It may easily be supposed, therefore, that the women of his fancy were very unlike most of those who

are to be met with at balls and assemblies. But it happened, unfortunately, that Lady Matilda's charms equalled any that even *he* could imagine had fallen to the share of an Armida; and, it is unnecessary to say, he had no doubt the beauty of her mind corresponded with that of her person. This, unhappily, was very far from the truth. Even at that youthful age, when, commonly, interest and avarice have not yet corroded the heart, and made it insensible to all feelings of love, it required no paternal influence to induce her to sell herself to a man as weak in mind, as he was disagreeable in person. Sir John Sydney was more than fifty years of age; and, after he had married her, she ruled him with despotic sway. He had now been dead above a twelve-

month; and she had reaped the reward of her sacrifice, in a jointure of two thousand a year, which was all he was able to dispose of; as the rest of his fortune went, with the title, to a distant branch of the family. This income was so insufficient for her expenses, that she lived chiefly upon the money she received in various shapes from her admirers, and upon credit. The consciousness of the enormous debts she was accumulating gave her no uneasiness, as she did not doubt she should be able to defray them, when her creditors grew importunate, by marrying some rich man, who would be willing to pay for her hand with his gold. In the mean time she took care that all her admirers should pay their way to her favour, in the form of jewels, trinkets, &c. Henry soon felt the effects

of her sordid disposition. Scarcely a week passed in which she did not, by admiring one thing, and wishing for another, lead him to spend considerable sums in presents for her. But she managed this so that he thought himself the person obliged, and that she had only yielded reluctantly to his importunities. Yet, notwithstanding the magnificent gifts she was in the habit of receiving from men, her character never suffered the slightest aspersion. It was well known to all but Henry, that her heart could never tempt her from the straight path; as she cared for no human being except herself. It was true that her love of admiration was unbounded. If she saw two married people living together in the closest union, it was her amusement to endeavour to blast their happiness,

and to attract the attention of the husband. No one, however, supposed that she felt the slightest interest in him, or was actuated by any motive but vanity. This character, more than any other, answers to our ideas of pure, unmixed wickedness. Yet such beings have existed, have been courted, and admired. It will easily be seen, that Henry's warmth and enthusiasm could be no match for the cold selfishness of this impenetrable woman. She received his professions of attachment with the appearance of warm interest, and with the most frigid inward indifference. In truth, she was a weak woman; that is, all her views, all her ideas, were confined in the greatest degree. Yet she acquired absolute dominion over Henry's superior mind. There are few persons so weak as to be inca-

pable of understanding a subject, if they will devote their constant and undivided thoughts to it. Lady Matilda had studied her own interest, in all its various branches, with the most persevering attention; and no one understood it better. This gave her an incalculable advantage over Henry, who, at all times, had thought more of others than of himself, and whose whole soul was now devoted to her. She talked to him so frequently of her heart and her feelings, that he never suspected she was speaking of something which she knew had no real existence. Yet, with all her art, and all his blindness, she frequently let drop sentiments which hurt and disappointed him. If a sick friend wished her to spend an hour with her, her feelings were so sensitive, that she could not

endure to see the sufferings of one she loved; and therefore she could not go. To Henry, who would have walked miles to be of use to a fellow-creature, this nervous kind of sensibility could not but appear very unfortunate and mistaken; and he was vexed she would not control her feelings, that they might be beneficial to others. But then he remembered the history she had given him of her marriage. She had explained to him that it had taken place from all those reasons, by which women account for being in possession of jointures of two thousand a year. She told him of the pecuniary distress of her father, of his entreaties that she would save him from inevitable ruin by marrying Sir John Sydney. She appealed to Henry whether it were possible to resist the

prayers of a fond father. Henry recollected how he had loved, his father; what power he might have had over him, had he wished to exert it; and he honoured and loved her for a sacrifice, of which, from the account he had heard of Sir John Sydney, he believed few women would have been capable. Could one, who, on great occasions, had shewn such heroick disinterestedness, be selfish and unfeeling? Impossible, he thought. Still, the contraction of her ideas was so unsuited to his noble and expanded views, that it could not escape his observation. Fashion was the standard of all her notions of right and wrong. "People would think it odd," she considered as the most unanswerable of arguments; and it was one which Henry's eloquence

could not baffle. She had all those foibles which some women are not ashamed to own, as if they wished to shew the miserable littleness and weakness of their minds. She would not give the pattern of a gown, or the copy of a scarce song, to her most intimate friend. When she expressed this before Henry, and added, "You know one does not wish to make one's things common;" he could hardly be said to understand what she meant to imply by these mean little sentiments. On the other hand, when he talked to her of benevolence, disinterestedness, or generosity, she scarcely understood the meaning of the terms he made use of; and, accustomed as she was to hear the superiority of his talents and understanding admitted as an established fact, she began almost to doubt

whether his were not rather a weak than a strong mind, unless his youth and ignorance of the world might be considered as the cause and excuse of his visionary notions. Thus they seldom agreed in any of their opinions; but she disguised many of her's —and love covers a multitude of defects.

The ruin of Mr. Arundel's fortune gave rise to much conversation in London. The fact of his having reduced his wife and children to poverty was so clearly established, that it did not admit of different representations. Henry was very much hurt when he heard of Mrs. Arundel's misfortunes. He called frequently to inquire after her during her illness; but he left London for a short time, before she was well enough to see him;

and she was gone to Clanmore previous to his return. He was very sorry to have missed seeing her; and determined to pay her a visit shortly.

In the mean time months passed away, and he became every day more and more intwined in the net Lady Matilda had spread for him. It was not possible for a man to be more devoid of vanity, though he had every right to think most highly of his powers of pleasing. Many were the hearts that sighed for him, while he was unconscious of the feelings he had involuntarily excited. But when he saw that Lady Matilda had no scruple in accepting from him the most expensive presents; when he received from her the most decided marks of preference in private, though her manner in publick was equally gracious to all; he could not

doubt that she returned his attachment. He had not yet found courage to disclose to her what had long been the subject of his thoughts, and to entreat her to unite her fate with his. She had given him every ground to think that she expected and wished him to make her an offer of marriage; but his natural diffidence as yet withheld him from doing so. If, fearing he had advanced too far, he retired, she recalled him by her fascinating smiles. He knew that he had not suffered her to be ignorant of her power over him. It was evident, then, that she would not play with his feelings, and encourage him in paying her attention, if her sentiments did not correspond with his. By this weakest of all arguments, he satisfied himself that every thing was as he

wished. It was true that whenever, in a general way, he spoke of marriage, she laughingly said she would not again give up her liberty; and turned off the conversation. But this he considered as merely the effect of a gaiety of disposition, which, perhaps, made her wish to enjoy a little longer the dissipation and pleasures of the world, before she retired with him into the country. Little did he think that she would have expressed the utmost surprise, and have called it the height of presumption, had she supposed that he seriously expected her to give up, for his sake, all her ambitious hopes of wealth and grandeur. He was not aware that his attachment, which, at first, her vanity made pleasing to her, she had now a much more solid reason for

wishing to retain. The truth was, her character as a coquette was so thoroughly established, that, although she had many admirers, she had not received one advantageous offer of marriage. Men feared to attach themselves for life to one who coquetted alike with all. Her debts were daily accumulating; and she knew she should soon be reduced to borrow a large sum, in order to satisfy the demands of impatient creditors. She was aware it would be very difficult for her to find any one who would be security for the payment of this money. Henry's fortune, though not large, would be sufficient for her purpose. He was known to have an estate of fifteen hundred a year, with a good house upon it. No one, therefore, would hesitate to take his security.

She had taken every possible care to keep him ignorant of the desperate state of her affairs: while she quieted her conscience with the idea, that, if it were unavoidable one of them should be ruined, there was no reason why she should not take all means to shelter herself from so dreadful a fate. She would rather have repaired the fatal effects of her extravagance, by marrying in such a manner as would prevent the necessity of her having recourse to Henry; but of this, at present, there was no prospect. Ruin was fast approaching; and she was preparing to meet it, by obtaining so strong a hold over Henry's affections, that he might be brought, if necessary, to sacrifice himself for her.

Things were in this state when the report that Mr. and Mrs. Arun-

del were parted, began to be circulated. Henry heard it with much emotion. He had been so engaged with Lady Matilda, that he had never found time to visit Julia; and he now regretted he had not shewn her this attention. Various accounts were given of the reasons for the separation. Some said Mrs. Arundel's temper was so much soured by her misfortunes, that poor Mr. Arundel found it impossible to live with her. But when Henry had inquired into the particulars, and heard the true cause of their parting, he took care that Julia should not be subject to aspersions so unmerited; and, in whatever company he found himself, he warmly espoused her cause. He remembered all Mr. Mordaunt had said of Mr. Arundel; which, when they became

acquainted, had appeared to him the effect of prejudice; and he wondered he had been so deceived. He knew not that he was now the victim of an error far more fatal; from which he would extricate himself too late.

CHAPTER XV.

Go, struggle with thy fate, pursue thy way,—
Though thou art poor, the world around is gay.
Thou hast no bread; but on thy aching sight
Proud Luxury's pavilions glitter bright;
In thy cold ear the song of gladness swells,
Whilst vacant Folly chimes her tinkling bells:
The careless crowd prolong their hollow glee,
Nor one relenting bosom thinks of thee.

BOWLES.

IT was now the end of August; and London was almost deserted. Some were preparing to go into the country for the shooting season; others were gone to the sea-side, or to some watering-place. All balls and parties were over; and all lovers real and imaginary were dispersed. Lady Ma-

tilda was soon going to Brighton; and Henry had settled to meet her there. One morning when he called at her house, he found her walking up and down the room, in the greatest agitation. When he inquired the cause of her apparent uneasiness, she told him she was going to put his friendship to the test. "Can you doubt," said he, clasping her hand, "that there is not that thing on earth which I would refuse to do for your sake?"

She then explained to him that she had contracted debts to a very large amount, which she must instantly discharge, as her creditors loudly protested they would arrest her, if she delayed another day paying the money they had so often demanded. "The sum I want to borrow is no less than twenty thousand pounds. I need not

tell you how much I reproach myself for having allowed my debts to accumulate to so frightful an amount; but it is useless now to talk of repentance. The money I must procure, or suffer myself to be thrown into prison." As she said this, she burst into tears.

"For heaven's sake do not talk of a prison, while I have one farthing left in the world!" exclaimed Henry passionately. "I will borrow the money for you. I will be security for the payment of the sum. If the risk were a million times greater, to save you, I would willingly incur it." As he spoke, his agitation was not less than her own.

"Oh! my dearest Henry," said she, "I knew I could depend upon you. I was certain that you would not desert me."

Even at the moment when she knew

he was exposing himself to almost cer-tain ruin, that she was expressing to him the most ardent gratitude, her art, her detestable hypocrisy, did not for-sake her. She told him, that, although, at present, she could procure no mo-ney but by his assistance, she had very great expectations from an uncle, who had almost bound himself to leave her a large share of his fortune. This man, she added, was on the verge of the grave; and Henry need, therefore, be under no apprehension of being called upon for this money; as she had no doubt, in a few months, she should be able to repay it. The fact was, she had once expected this relation would leave her his fortune; but she knew that, some years before, he had formed an attachment which had entirely se-

parated him from his connexions; and that, for a length of time, he had taken no notice of her. A small legacy he might possibly leave her; but this even was uncertain. By this misrepresentation, she completely deceived Henry as to the extent of her obligation to him. He borrowed for her the sum of twenty thousand pounds. Her debts were paid, and her creditors silenced. She continued to talk to him of the large fortune which must soon come to her; and thus she quieted the fears he would otherwise have felt at the step he had taken.

The weather was now hot and sultry. Lady Matilda one day proposed to Henry, and his cousin, Lady Charlotte Somerset, that they should make a party to visit Kensington Gardens be-

fore she left London. They agreed it would be a very pleasant excursion; and it was settled that they should meet at three o'clock. Henry then left Lady Matilda, saying he must go into the city upon some business, but that he would return punctually at the hour she had appointed.

As he walked along one of the crowded streets near the Strand, he was stopped by a little ragged beggar, who implored him, in the most earnest manner, to save him from starving. The very wretched appearance of the poor boy, who seemed scarcely able to stand, and whose squalid looks bore witness that his distress was real, struck Henry with compassion. He asked him where he lived? and the boy, in a feeble voice, answered, "Oh! I live

a good way off from here; and there's father and sisters lying at home almost starved; for there's ever so many of us, and we've got nothing to eat; but I managed to crawl out and beg something for myself. Father's so ill he can't move. For pity's sake come home to help him; for he don't know where to get a bit of bread."

Henry immediately took the little boy into a shop, and gave him something to eat. When he seemed refreshed by the sustenance he had so long wanted, Henry desired he would shew him where he lived. "It's some way off," said the child; "but never mind that, we shall get there in less than an hour." Henry looked at his watch; it was then past two o'clock. If he went with the boy,

he could not return in time to keep his engagement with Lady Matilda. This would be a great disappointment to him; but when it was a choice between a party of pleasure and assisting a fellow-creature, he could not hesitate which to prefer; and he instantly followed his little guide. The boy, weakened by want and illness, could hardly drag his feet along; and he was obliged to walk so slowly, that he did not reach his home till more than an hour after they had left the shop.

After going through many dark alleys, they arrived at a wretched hovel, where the child said he lived. The roof was so low, that Henry was obliged to stoop as he went in. A little skeleton was sitting on the step near the door-way. Her height and little shrunk

limbs shewed that she could not be more than eight years old. But there was nothing youthful in her countenance; for she had the wrinkles and haggard looks of age. There were two other children in this miserable hole, who were crying bitterly. The father of the family was sitting on the ground. His black matted hair hung about his neck. His eyes were sunk into their sockets, and had the eager look of famine; his cheek-bones almost pierced the thin sallow skin that was dragged over them. Despair and sullen rage marked his wild countenance; while his eye was sternly fixed on vacancy. He took no notice of Henry as he came in. Intent only on his wants, his entrance excited no surprise in him. He did not look up; but continued mutter-

ing horrible imprecations to himself. Henry was almost suffocated by the unwholesome fetid atmosphere of the room, which had no passage to admit light or air into it, except the door-way, that was low and narrow. As he looked upon a mat that was in one corner, he saw a baby laid upon it. He thought it was asleep; but, when he touched it, he shrunk back; the cold stiffness of the limbs shewed him it was a corpse. This poor little creature had expired an hour before Henry came into the hut. No one had observed its last struggle; when death stifled the cries of want and famine. The father had heard its screams. He now heard them no more. But he noticed neither the shrieks, nor the silence that followed them. When Henry said he

was come to help him, he answered fiercely, "I'm starved!" The sight of such dreadful misery filled Henry with horror and compassion. He ran out to find a baker's shop. This hovel was in a dark alley, in the worst part of the city. The family who lived in it, seemed removed beyond the reach of assistance; for all near them were in a state of the most abject poverty. It was some time before Henry found a place where he could purchase provisions. At length, he saw some loaves in a little window; and he returned with two of them to the miserable family. When he offered them the bread, they caught hold of it, eager to snatch it from each other; and began gnawing it voraciously. It was dreadful to see how hunger and

want had frozen all natural feeling in their hearts. The father seized a bit of bread which Henry had given to the little girl, just as she was going to put it into her mouth, and devoured it ravenously. They had soon eaten up the two small loaves Henry had brought, and asked for more. They did not thank him for the food he had given them: they felt no gratitude; and thought only of stopping the cravings of ravenous hunger. Henry soon procured them more bread; and, after they were relieved from the torments of actual want, they began to think of him who had succoured them, and poured out the most grateful thanks. He determined he would not leave the place without doing every thing in his power to afford them relief.

A few tattered rags were the only covering they had; and he went out to find a shop where he might purchase ready-made clothes. As he walked along a street at some distance from the hut, he found what he wanted; and in half an hour he returned with the shopman, both laden with clothes of different sizes. When he had made them all fit themselves, and had procured for them an ample supply of provisions, he went away amidst the blessings of the poor wretches, whom he had rescued from the jaws of death. Had he not followed the little beggar, there did not seem any possible means of relief for them, as their abode was in the midst of those, whose distress and poverty must have prevented their assisting them, had they wished it. The man

had been long ill of a fever, which the natural strength of his constitution had overcome; but he was too weak to do any work. Henry had given orders for the burial of the poor infant; and had desired the father to come to his lodging as soon as he was able to walk so far, promising to procure for him some permanent relief, which might secure him from being again reduced to such a deplorable condition. He had heard enough of his history from one of his neighbours, to convince him he was a deserving object. Upon his inquiring of a man whom he saw sitting at the door of a little shop, whether he knew the person who lived in the adjoining hovel, he answered; "Know him, bless your honour; ay, to be sure I do, well enough. I've known Jack Brown this many a

long year. I knew him in his best days; and then you couldn't find a more hard-working man all the world over. He was glad to put his hand to any job; and used to mend pots and pans and such like. But he married a lazy hussy, who wouldn't work, or be any help to him. Then he had a number of children; and went on working harder and harder. But when he saw 'twas no use, and that they crawled about the streets pilfering and begging, and never would come to no good, do what he would, he took it so to heart like, that he never held up his head no more. He left off work; and fell to drinking, and going after bad company. Then soon all went to pieces: his wife died; and he hadn't a friend to look upon him. But now, God willing, I hope he's found one."

The reflection that he had saved a whole family from the horrors of famine, filled Henry's breast with the most pleasurable emotions; and his heart bounded as he thought that, by giving up his party to Kensington, he had been the means of alleviating distress so dreadful, that, had he not beheld it, he could not have believed it to exist. He pleased himself with thinking he would describe to Lady Matilda all the misery he had witnessed and relieved; and that she would love him the better for having sacrificed a party, to which she knew he looked forward with so much pleasure. At length he came within sight of the house; and, when he looked at his watch, he found it was past five o'clock. As he ran up stairs to her, his breast glowed with every virtuous,

benevolent feeling; and his heart beat with emotions of love and joy.

When he came in, he found her alone; and instantly told her, in an agitated manner, what had detained him; all he had done; and all he had felt about it. While he was speaking, she continued counting the stitches of a purse she was netting; and, when he had ended his story, she said, coldly, "It may be very right to assist poor people; but I wish you would not make engagements, if you do not intend to keep them. I have waited two hours for you; and now it is too late to go."

Henry had felt certain that Lady Matilda would know how much he wished to be with her; how vexed he must have been to break his engagement; that she would receive him

with all the warmth of affection and approbation—and this was the reception she gave him! The blood mounted to his cheek as he listened to her. His heart was too full to allow him to speak; and he stood gazing vacantly out of window. After a silence of five minutes, Lady Matilda said sullenly, "Well, Mr. Ponsonby, I must go and dress to dine with Lady Charlotte Somerset, where, I believe, you are engaged too; so I shall leave you." Saying this, she walked out of the room.

Henry returned to his lodging, lost in the most melancholy reflections. Lady Matilda had frequently shewn little traits of selfishness; but he had overlooked some, and palliated others. He had come to her elated with the consciousness of having done a bene-

volent action—certain she would enter into his feelings; and she had chilled them by the most selfish coldness. Her vanity was hurt at his apparent neglect; and she could put a party of pleasure in competition with the rescue of a whole family. Ought she not to have known his heart? Ought she not to feel certain that he never wished to be absent from her? Could he ever be happy united to one so incapable of understanding his feelings—so cold—so selfish? These thoughts had taken place of all the happy visions in which he had indulged; and most heavily did they weigh upon his heart. The events of the last hour had so completely overset him, that he found it difficult to quiet his mind, or to determine how to act. For the first time, the thought that he might not be

happy if he were married to Lady Matilda, forced itself upon him. Yet he felt that he adored her, and could not exist without her. Indignant, however, that she should be capable of treating him with so much injustice, he resolved not to shew her how deeply she had wounded him, and to affect the indifference he could not feel. Her conduct almost made him doubt her attachment to him. He remembered the expressions she had used, the chilling frigidity of her manner. This was no impulse of passion, no sudden resentment; but "cold dilations working from the heart." He determined, then, when he met her, to assume a carelessness of manner, and appear occupied and pleased with others. By the effect this change had upon her, he thought he should be able to ascer-

tain whether she really were attached to him or not. Having thus made up his mind to the line of conduct he would adopt, he went to dine with Lord Rossmore.

CHAPTER XVI.

Volgimi il guardo altero,
Parlami in volto umano;
Il tuo disprezzo è vano,
E' vano il tuo favor.

IL METESTASIO.

LORD Rossmore and Lady Charlotte Somerset were the children of the Earl de Montfort, brother of the late Mr. Ponsonby. He had been for some months in a bad state of health; and was not now expected to live long. His son impatiently awaited the moment when he should find himself in possession of thirty thousand a year, which was supposed to be the amount of his father's income. He was a young man of weak understanding, and of the

most ungovernable temper, which was inflamed by the habit of drinking in which he indulged. Lord de Montfort had found it impracticable to live with him without perpetual quarrels; and had therefore heard of his intention to go abroad with the greatest pleasure. He was just returned to England, after an absence of three years. His appearance was very disagreeable. He was particularly plain; and the fierce stare of his eye bespoke at once the violence of his temper. His manner was coarse, rough, and awkward. Lord de Montfort, who was a very sensible man, felt distressed whenever he spoke; for every thing he said indicated folly and ill temper.

Lady Charlotte was a good-humoured, amiable girl; and, had she not been spoiled by affectation, she

would not have been disagreeable. She wished to pass for a blue-stocking. At first she thought her numerous engagements, and the dissipated life she led, would prevent her acquiring sufficient information to entitle her to so distinguished an appellation. But when she became acquainted with some ladies of that description, she soon found out her mistake; and saw that the principal requisite for that character is the pretension of learning, not the reality. By attending to the conversation of many who went by the name of "learned ladies," she discovered the proper method that was to be adopted to acquire the reputation of knowledge without any trouble. If she found herself in company with a person who was known never to open a book, she was to go over the names

of several works, and ask him if he had read them. Of course he had not; and while he blushed at his ignorance, he admired her knowledge, for he took it for granted, as she praised some, and censured others, that she had read them all; whereas, if she attended to the opinions she heard given of them, she might save herself this trouble. By adopting this plan, and talking frequently of the necessity of employing one's time, and cultivating one's mind, it will be found, upon trial, that a very little reading, with proper management, will go a great way; and that, in order to acquire the appellation of "a learned lady," it is perfectly unnecessary and superfluous to undergo the fatigue and labour of study. Besides making herself conspicuous by

her thirst for knowledge, she was equally desirous of passing for a romantick and sentimental person. Unfortunately for her cousin, she thought she had found in him what she called "a kindred soul." While she poured into his ear her notions upon various subjects relating to the heart, and such words as boundless confidence, rapturous enthusiasm, congeniality of spirit, &c. flew out of her mouth by dozens, Henry thought her so ridiculous, that he was ashamed of having ever felt a moment's uneasiness. Yet, with all these foibles, she was a good-natured, inoffensive girl; and her follies were of the most harmless kind to herself, as well as to others; for her sentiment never shewed itself but in conversation; nor did it betray her into any

inconveniently romantick actions. Lord de Montfort saw her conversing with Henry without feeling the slightest uneasiness; for, though her theory in regard to love was very sentimental, he knew that when it became a question of practical marriage, that union was so connected in her mind with the possession of jewels, equipages, &c. that she had an absolute incapacity of falling in love with poor men; and Henry's fortune would have been poverty to her, who was accustomed to every species of luxury.

When Henry arrived, he found the company at dinner. From a fatality by which it always happens that the person whom we wish to have near us sits opposite, and the one we dislike sits next to us,

Henry found that a vacant chair was left for him near Lady Charlotte, and that Lady Matilda was seated on the other side. In the present state of his feelings this arrangement was of little consequence, except that he dreaded Lady Charlotte's incessant inquiries about his studies. He was scarcely seated before she asked him the questions she now put to every person she conversed with, "whether he had read the Antiquary, and Glenarvon?" and, "which he liked best?" These were the names of two novels, which, at that time, had been lately published, and were in the hands of every one. Unfortunately Henry had read neither; so he was obliged to listen to the abstract she would give of them. Afterwards she inquired whether he continued the studies he

had pursued with so much success at Cambridge. Henry sighed to think how he had trifled away his time since then; for, at present, he had no employment to produce, but sitting with Lady Matilda in the morning; walking with her in the park; and dancing with her in the evening. He therefore told his persecuting cousin, that business of various kinds had prevented his reading much of late. He then became so absent, that she turned to her more agreeable neighbour on the other side.

In the mean time Lady Matilda was talking and coquetting with Lord Rossmore. After dinner was over, and a small party had assembled, waltzing was proposed. This was a favorite dance of Henry's; and Lady Matilda was always his partner. But,

after the resolution he had taken, he hesitated whether he could ask her to waltz, without a gross violation of the rule of conduct he had prescribed to himself. While he remained in a state of uncertainty as to what he should do, he was not a little disconcerted at having his doubts solved for him, by her beginning to waltz with Lord Rossmore. He stood looking on, absorbed in painful reflections, while she was displaying the graceful elegance of her lovely form. As they passed by him, he heard Lord Rossmore mention his name; and, though he could not hear all Lady Matilda answered to his remark, the words, "he is very young" caught his ear. There was nothing very heavy in the charge; yet the tone in which this sentence was uttered made it not very agree-

able to him. He might have seen her talking incessantly with Lord Rossmore, without suspecting that she could have an idea of marrying a man he thought so objectionable in all ways. Besides, though he felt very much displeased with her whole behaviour and manner during the evening, when he remembered all that had passed between them, he could not seriously doubt her being attached to him. He only feared she could not love as he did.

There is nothing so easy as to affect indifference towards a person we love, while that person appears to observe it, and to be hurt by it; and nothing so difficult as to persist in it, when it seems to be unnoticed, or disregarded. The levity and gaiety with which Lady Matilda conversed, made Henry doubt

whether she were even conscious of the change in his manner. After he had persisted for some time in looking to the other side of the room, if he turned his eyes again upon her, by no chance did he ever find her's fixed upon him; on the contrary, she seemed entirely occupied in dancing and talking with Lord Rossmore. "Can she remember how we parted," thought he, "and yet be so gay? Surely, either she can have no heart, or she must be totally indifferent to me." Then he hoped that perhaps she perceived his coldness, and affected to be in high spirits, to hide from him that she was hurt by it. If so, he would seek an explanation; and, at all events, whatever her feelings might be, *his* would not allow him to continue with her upon his present footing. With the strongest understanding, Henry thus

went on deluding himself as to the real motive of her conduct; blaming her one moment; defending her the next; and loving her always.

CHAPTER XVII.

I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
Misled by fancy's meteor-ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven.

BURNS.

THE next day Henry began to think over the circumstances that had disunited him from Lady Matilda. The more he reflected upon them, the more he felt convinced that she had been selfish and unjust. Yet he was certain she would never acknowledge this; and that, if he did not make the first advances towards a reconciliation, he must be satisfied that the coldness

which now subsisted between them should continue. Such was his infatuation, that he had suffered her to acquire unlimited power over his heart and mind. Almost all his time had been devoted to her; and, when he was absent, she alone occupied his thoughts. His studies were neglected; his talents unemployed. If he endeavoured to fix his mind to any serious occupation, his attention wandered; and he found he had looked over pages of his book, without being conscious of the contents. He was ashamed of the weakness of his conduct; but, as yet, he had been unable to alter it. He determined he would now endeavour to obtain some command over his feelings. His pride was hurt at the idea, that he must lower himself to seek an explanation

from Lady Matilda, if he intended to be restored to her favour; and he hoped that the sense he had of the injury she had done him, would give him power to persevere in the resolution he had adopted. If she were so forgetful of all that had passed between them, so indifferent to him, as to allow a feeling of pique to occasion a final rupture between them, he would then get the better of a passion so weak, so degrading, when one so unworthy was the object of it.

Under this idea, he abstained from calling upon her for a fortnight; he merely bowed to her when they met in publick; while she shewed him the most marked coolness and reserve. Henry was driven almost to desperation, when he thought that their con-

nexion would thus, by degrees, sink into a distant acquaintance. He now believed he had lost her for ever; and bitterly did he repent that he had suffered her displeasure against him to continue so long, without endeavouring to be reconciled to her. He walked about, tormented by the most painful feelings, not caring whither he went, or what he did. He could neither sleep nor eat; and his health suffered materially from the incessant agitation of his mind. In vain he tried to stifle his grief, to divert his thoughts from dwelling on Lady Matilda, by reading or amusement; her image, still pursued him.

It is the peculiar property of affections of this nature, if they have met with disappointment, to unhinge every

better faculty of the mind. Those who give way to them, think but of the attainment of one object. If they cannot obtain it, they have felt so powerful an interest, that they can no longer be satisfied with enjoyments, which, formerly, were sufficient for their happiness. They have caught a glimpse of supreme felicity; and, when that has vanished, they despise and under-rate those blessings which fall so far short of it. They have no longer any ambition to make use of the talents they possess. They care not to acquire distinction in life, when they have lost that which they think could alone make existence valuable. There, undoubtedly, have been instances of persons, who, under the influence of violent passions, have been ca-

pable of the highest exertion of mind and talent. But these must be considered as exceptions to a very general rule. This has given rise to the opinion, that all very strong affections, however lawful, should be guarded against, as subversive of our happiness. Certainly the pain inflicted on us by their disappointment, is not the less acute because they are of an innocent kind. When we consider upon how uncertain a tenure we possess all our blessings, we should endeavour, if possible, to stand off from them in some degree. The condition of a slave is not so wretched, so degraded, as that of him whose heart and mind are bound in such servitude, that his fate shall depend upon the fancies and caprices of another. When this is the case, who will dare to assert that a few

days, a few hours, may not put an end to all his visions of happiness? The lives of our fellow-creatures hang upon a thread; their conduct is generally as little to be depended upon. What reliance can then be placed upon creatures of so frail a nature? But this is a discussion in which few are interested. The mass of people is made up of those whose feelings will allow them to wish and to be indifferent, to love and to forget, according to circumstances. "You are too wise to care for what you have lost, or to wish for what you cannot obtain." This is the usual form of consolation to a person suffering under any disappointment; and, in general, a very sufficient one.

Unfortunately Henry's feelings would not permit him to make up his mind

to his situation. He found the breach between Lady Matilda and him growing wider and wider every day; and he saw that the moment was approaching when they would not speak to each other. This idea was intolerable. He had hoped from day to day that sorrow for her past conduct would induce her to express to him a wish that they should be on their former footing. But now that he found the time was passing away, and that she made no attempt at a reconciliation, he began to think he had gone too far; and, rather than lose her, he resolved to submit to any humiliation.

One morning, as he was sitting in his room, ruminating how he should act, he received a note from Lady Matilda, written in so hasty a manner, that it was scarcely legible. It con-

tained only these words. " If you have not lost every feeling of regard for me; if your repeated professions of the most unalterable attachment were not all false and deceitful, come to me instantly. Do not delay a moment, or it will be too late. Your's, as ever, M. S."

Henry ran to her house. He found her in the greatest distress, wringing her hands, and imploring a hard-featured man to give her a little respite. " No, no," answered he roughly, " not a day, not an hour. Pay me instantly, or you shall go to prison. Do you think I have been saving my money for years, to be cheated of it at last? No, I tell you it won't do. Pay me, or march." When Henry looked at the man, he recognised the Jew, from whom he had

borrowed the twenty thousand pounds about a month before.

"Did you not tell me," said Henry imperiously, "that you would not insist upon payment till six months had expired? What do you mean by this insolent demand upon Lady Matilda?"

"When I said that," answered the Jew, "I thought my money in safe hands; but now I find you are pretty near as much in debt as the lady herself. Besides, I have been cheated of a large sum by a gentleman who borrowed from me, and now has run away. So I won't wait any longer. Either you or the lady must come down with the money; or you shall both go to jail."

While this dialogue was going on, Lady Matilda was crying violently, and entreating Henry to protect her

from this horrible wretch. Henry stood with his head resting against the window, lost in dismay and uncertainty. He was now sensible of the full extent of the folly he had been guilty of. At the time he knew he was running some risk in being security for Lady Matilda; but he had no idea that this step would end in his ruin. He had not calculated the improbability of her being ever able to discharge so large a debt; and she had spoken with the utmost confidence of repaying the sum he had borrowed very shortly. Now the Jew would no longer wait; she could not pay; and the debt must fall upon him. There was no chance of his being repaid; for she was now obliged to inform him that her uncle was dead, and

had only left her three hundred pounds. He walked about the room for some moments in the greatest agitation. At length he said to the Jew, who continued to repeat his threats, "Say no more; I must be answerable for the debt. You must take possession of my estate; and satisfy your demands. Go to my lodging; and I will come to you directly." The Jew readily took his leave, and walked joyfully out of the house. The history of his losses was a mere fiction. But he had heard that Henry was very much in debt, which was but too true; and he began to be afraid for his money. He determined, therefore, to have it repaid instantly.

After he had left the room, Lady Matilda poured out the warmest pro-

testations of gratitude to Henry. She told him he was her only friend; that, without his aid, she must have submitted to the disgrace and horrors of a prison. He made no answer; but, resting his head upon his hand, seemed plunged in deep thought. At length, when she found that he was not inclined to speak, she took hold of his hand, and protested to him that she had been miserable for the last three weeks; that pride alone had prevented her making the apology she felt was due to him; but that he must know he was dearer to her than any one.

"I hope it may be so," said Henry, sighing deeply; "for it is all I have left now. I cannot myself conceive the possibility of allowing a person I

loved, to remain for weeks in a state of misery, because my pride would not suffer me to confess I had used him ill. But our feelings are so different, that it is impossible we should ever understand each other, or act in the same manner." As he spoke, the tears rolled down his cheek.

Lady Matilda omitted no protestation that might convince him of her sorrow and repentance. She told him that the displeasure she had shewn at his conduct was the strongest proof of an attachment, which made her unable to endure the least appearance of neglect. At length she succeeded in soothing his irritated feelings. He would not, at the moment he was conferring upon her so signal an obligation, speak to her of marriage; for he

felt a delicacy, now that he was almost ruined, in proposing to her to share his broken fortunes. She was in possession of a jointure of two thousand a year, which was paid her annually by the person who inherited Sir John Sydney's property. This being only a yearly income, could not enable her to pay a debt of twenty thousand pounds; but it would be sufficient for them to live upon comfortably. He had no doubt she would hereafter express to him her wish that he should share it with her; but, at present, he would not suggest this by making her an offer of marriage; and he determined to wait till he had settled his affairs, and knew what he had to depend upon, before he laid open to her the wishes that had so long occupied

his mind. He soon left her to return home, that he might make his arrangements with the Jew.

He found him waiting for him; and it was settled that he should take possession of the house and furniture of Clare Hall, and that he should go there immediately for that purpose. Henry told him he would follow in a few days, that he might settle his affairs before the house was finally given up. The Jew then left him; and he gave free vent to the vehement expression of his sorrow, which he had restrained while he was with Lady Matilda. He had ruined himself for her; and, if she deceived him, what resource would remain to him? He chased away this idea as an impossibility. But so powerful were the re-

proaches of his conscience, which told him his own weakness was the cause of his ruin; so sharp were his feelings of remorse, when he thought how he had neglected his father's advice; that Lady Matilda's professions of attachment afforded him no consolation. He was so much affected by this last event, that, for many days, he was too ill to leave his room. During this time, he received repeated notes from Lady Matilda, written in the most affectionate terms. These, and the necessity of submitting to the consequence of his own imprudence, at length succeeded in calming his mind. He was soon sufficiently recovered to begin his journey. As he did not wish to see Lady Matilda before his affairs were settled, he wrote to tell her he should not be absent more than three or four

days; and that he would come to her the moment he returned.

The next morning he put himself into the coach, which stopped late in the evening at the distance of half a mile from his home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

* Mark yon old mansion, frowning through the trees,
Whose hollow turret woos the whistling breeze.
That casement, arch'd with ivy's brownest shade,
First to these eyes the light of heav'n convey'd.
The mouldering gateway strews the grass-grown court,
Once the calm scene of many a simple sport;
When nature pleas'd, for life itself was new,
And the heart promis'd what the fancy drew.

ROGERS.

HENRY walked slowly through the village that led to Clare Hall. As he passed along, he met many of the labourers returning to their homes. Some kept their eyes fixed on the ground, pretending not to see him; while

others turned down the narrow paths to avoid meeting him. Clare Hall had been for many ages in Mr. Ponsonby's family; and its inhabitants were looked up to, almost like sovereigns, by the villagers. They had loved and honoured the late Mr. Ponsonby, as if he had been their father. He settled their disputes; he procured them work; and his hand was ever open to relieve their wants. When he died, it was a day of mourning throughout the village. Henry promised he would be to them what his father had been. They all loved "young Master Harry;" for, as a child, he delighted to give them the little money he could collect. They looked forward to the time when he would marry, and live amongst them, beloved and respected as his

father had been. But soon the news that a Jew had taken possession of the venerable mansion, and that the furniture was to be sold, spread consternation through the whole village. They remembered how fond Master Harry was of the old house; and they all said it must go to his heart to sell it. When they saw him, they could not bear to look in his face. He asked some of them how they were; "very well, and God bless you Master Harry," they answered in a sorrowful tone; and passed on.

As he approached the house, the path was strewed with sear leaves, which the October blasts had scattered on the ground. It was a beautiful autumnal evening; the sky was red and lowering; and the last rays of

the setting sun gilded the spire of the village church. This sight recalled many painful recollections. There his father slept in his grave. "Oh, my dear father!" exclaimed Henry, as his eyes rested on the place that held his remains, "you hear not the cries of the poor, who have now no friend; you see not the misery of your child; you know not how he has disregarded and forgotten all your parting advice."

He had now reached the door. No one came to welcome him, as he walked into the room that had been his father's study. The furniture was piled against the wall. The carpet was rolled up in a corner. All the pictures were taken down, except his father's, which still hung at its usual place. Henry

burst into tears, as he beheld his mild, benevolent countenance, which wore its wonted smile of approbation. Now, every thing was changed. He had ruined his health, his fortune; he had forgotten all his father's instructions; yet still he smiled upon him with fond, paternal love.

As he stood gazing at this picture, he heard a slow, heavy step approach the door; and when he turned, he saw Benson standing near it, looking reproachfully at him. "Ah! Master Harry," said he, shaking his grey head sorrowfully; "I'm glad my old master's dead. It would break his heart to see such doings. He who used to be so fond of the place, what would he say to see it all go to the Jews? But, thank God! it don't signify to

him; he's dead, and can't know what's going on in his old house."

"Oh, Benson; if my father had lived, I should never have become such a worthless wretch. I should have been happy and respected. But now . . . . ." He hid his face in his hands, almost choked with tears.

"Come, dear Master Harry, don't take on so. To be sure it does go to my heart to see the old place my poor master was so fond of, going all to rack and ruin. 'Tis hard for me, who am an old man, to see such sights; but now it can't be helped; and there's no use in grieving about what's done."

Benson loved Henry as if he had been his son, but no one understood less the art of consolation; and, while he attempted to comfort him, he

aggravated his sorrow by the perpetual mention of his father's name.

"I thought, Master Harry," said he, as he saw his eyes fixed on his father's picture, "that, to be sure, you wouldn't like my old master's picture to go with all the rest; so I left it hung up there." Henry told him he would take it to London; and then desired he would prepare a bed for him, as he was so fatigued he could not sit up longer.

The last act of Henry's history was drawing fast to a close. Since he had left home, he had lived in one constant state of anxiety. His mind had preyed upon his body; and now his constitution was giving way. Soon, very soon, the last contention would be over; and he would lie down in peace. He knew

it not. He felt weary, wretched, and exhausted; but, as yet, he thought not of death; and when he remembered the attachment Lady Matilda had professed for him, he indulged many a sanguine hope of happiness. Her income would be sufficient for them. They would retire into the country; and live only for each other. Those talents, which he had long suffered to lie dormant, he would then have every motive for exerting; and he would rise to that distinction, for which his soul had always panted. Visions so bright still glittered before his eyes, and gilded the distant prospect. He stood upon the brink of a precipice—and yet, he saw it not.

The next morning Henry walked over his old haunts. The recollection

of scenes long past, of times when he lived happy with his father, pressed heavily upon him, and chased every feeling from his breast but pain, and sharp regret. The visions, he sometimes loved to dwell upon, all vanished. He thought he could never again enjoy one moment of happiness, when he remembered his father's last words; "Let the recollection of all the advice your father has given you sink deep into your heart;" and considered how lost they were upon him, how little regard he had shewn to his memory. How could he forget so kind, so tender a father! These thoughts harassed his mind. He felt unable to endure being alone, a prey to his miserable reflections; and he determined to visit Mr. Mordaunt. He was ashamed

to meet him after all that had passed; and yet he wished it. He turned his step to the path that led towards his house, and walked slowly along, till he reached the gate that opened into Mr. Mordaunt's garden.

CHAPTER XIX.

If thou beest he; but O how fall'n! how chang'd
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
Cloth'd with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads though bright!

MILTON.

THE news of Henry's ruin, and of the sale of Clare Hall, had reached Mr. Mordaunt; and he had heard it with the most sincere regret. Though Mr. Mordaunt was not remarkable for the warmth of his affections, Henry had so entwined himself round his heart, that he felt for him almost as a father. There is an irresistible charm in energy of feeling, which attracts even those who have it not. Hence many affect it, whose hearts, in truth,

are cold and selfish. But Henry uttered with simplicity the most amiable sentiments, as if they were what every one must feel, unconscious of the impression he was giving of his own heart; and as Mr. Mordaunt listened to him, he thought he had never beheld a character so lovely, so engaging.

As he was sitting in his study, he saw a sickly, emaciated figure coming towards the house; and he was shocked when he recognised that this faded form was Henry's. "My dear young friend," said he, affectionately pressing his hand, "I am grieved to see your altered looks. I fear there is something very much amiss with you."

Henry was so fatigued by his walk, and so overcome by the feelings which oppressed his heart, that, at first, he was scarcely able to speak. After he

had been seated a few moments, he said, "I suppose you have heard of all the misfortunes that have befallen me since we met. I fear you must have long lost the good opinion you once expressed of me."

"My dear Henry, you could not easily lose my friendship and esteem," answered Mr. Mordaunt kindly. "I know you too well. But I fear you have fallen a victim to the arts and treachery of others, which your own heart would not suffer you to guard against. I have heard that you are ruined by having given security for another's debts. Who this person is, or how you were drawn into taking a step always so hazardous, I have yet to learn."

Henry then told him his history, concealing only those particulars which

would have been disadvantageous to Lady Matilda, and dwelling fondly on her charms and irresistible attractions.

When he had finished, "This is indeed a lamentable history," said Mr. Mordaunt; "and the more I consider it, the more unhappy I think it; for I fear you have yet much to suffer. You left me some months ago, possessed of health, fortune, and happiness. You now return to me with the fixed look of care, with the haggard aspect of illness, ruined in spirits and fortune. You account for this sad alteration by your connexion with one, who, you say, is very much attached to you. If this be true, why has she injured you so cruelly? From all you tell me, I fear you have fallen into the hands of an artful, designing woman,

who will not be satisfied but with your ruin. When you speak of her merits and perfections, it appears to me you have nothing to bring forward, but that her eyes, her countenance, her form, are lovely. You seem confident of her attachment to you; and yet you say, that, when you wish to speak to her of marriage, she flies from the subject. For heaven's sake, Henry, if you have any respect for the memory of your excellent father; any regard to the advice of your friend; any concern for your welfare and character in life; do not give way to a weak and miserable passion. Do not suffer your distinguished talents, your fair prospects, to be blasted by your attachment to a base, deceitful woman. It is in vain to look back upon

the past. Too much have you suffered from the uncontrolled indulgence of a passion, innocent within certain bounds; but guilty, when carried to excess, because it is subversive of health, of happiness, of every noble energy of mind. At least, take a decisive line of conduct. Let reason now resume her sway. If you be determined not to give up Lady Matilda, if she indeed be worthy of you, (though much I fear she is not,) bring her to an explanation without delay; and, if you are to be united to her, let it be before you have sacrificed every remnant of health and spirits. All your cheerfulness of mind, all your gay vivacity, has left you. You are literally worn out with care and anxiety. If you be resolved to do a foolish

thing, the sooner you do it the better; and this state of suspense must be far more hurtful to you than any marriage."

Henry thanked Mr. Mordaunt most gratefully for the kind interest he took in his welfare; and promised to follow his advice. He was now but the wreck of what he had been nine months before. All his brilliant animation of countenance and manner had faded away. He could speak and think but upon one painful subject; and the necessity of raising his spirits, even to the tone of Mr. Mordaunt's, was irksome to him. His looks were so changed, that Mr. Mordaunt could scarcely recognise him; while he himself, suffering continually from indifferent health, without society, without

amusement, yet retaining calmness and peace of mind, appeared to Henry precisely what he was when he last saw him.

Mr. Mordaunt, wishing to draw off Henry's mind from dwelling on his own situation, began to converse on indifferent subjects.

"I am afraid, sir," said Henry, "your present abode is not very agreeable to you; the society you can have in this neighbourhood must be very unsuited to your taste and habits."

"I have but one objection," answered Mr. Mordaunt, "to my house, which is, that it stands within what my neighbours call 'a walking distance' from their's. As this is a walk I never wish to take, I am perpetually under the necessity of giving offence

to those, whom I would willingly conciliate, could I do it without much inconvenience. But as this is impossible, I am obliged to be satisfied with being considered by them as a sullen, miserable hypochondriac. We cannot expect that people will discover the true cause why we prefer books and solitude to their society; which is, because it happens not to be agreeable to us; and they would rather account for our seclusion by any reason but the plain obvious one, which civility will not permit us to give them. I have heard many persons speak of the duties we owe to society, as a reason for attending dinners and parties. I have been always willing to suppose that those, who made use of these words, annexed some meaning to them; though I

never had the curiosity to inquire what it might be. For my own part, I am unable to discover by what moral obligation I am bound to spend some hours in conversing upon topics probably as uninteresting to others as they are to me. We ought to assist our fellow-creatures if they be in distress; to advise them if they stand in need of it; but, why we are to weary ourselves in attempts to amuse them, I cannot comprehend. I am not one of those who think the hours wasted which we devote to society. An intercourse with those whose minds are suited to my own, affords me a higher gratification than I can derive from any other source. But I am an epicure in that respect. Of course we have no right to expect that those we asso-

ciate with should be entertaining. This is the prerogative of so few, that, if we did, we must at once banish three parts of those, who are now considered as very sufficiently agreeable members of society. But I have generally been fortunate enough to associate with persons who had some recommendation of mind or manner; and now that I am surrounded by men, whose whole thoughts are occupied in getting money, (a science in which I was never able to make much progress,) I cannot accommodate my taste to the coarse food I am reduced to. I would rather depend upon my own thoughts, and my books, than be subject to the restraint of keeping up an intercourse with them; therefore they, very naturally, consider me as a

man who detests the sight of any human being. But I am now old enough to be indifferent to this kind of misrepresentation; and, careless what judgment they may form of me, I have withdrawn from their society to retirement and study."

Mr. Mordaunt pressed Henry to stay dinner, to which he agreed; but he said he would return to Clare Hall in the evening. "I must take a last leave of my happy home," said he, "before I quit it for ever."

"But I hope you will come to see me, when you have a little time at your own disposal. My house will be always open to you."

"Oh! my dear sir," answered Henry, "I can never visit you here. I could not bear to see my father's house inha-

bited by strangers, and to think that I alone am the cause of it. But if I should marry, and settle any where, I hope you may be induced to honour me with a visit."

Mr. Mordaunt sighed to think how improbable it was that Henry's expectations would be realized. There was no use in expressing this; and he only answered, "The indifferent state of my health, and the habit of remaining fixed in one spot, which now is growing fast upon me, and will strengthen with declining years, must, I fear, make our meeting not very probable. But your will let me hear from you. Shall you be in London to-morrow?"

"No," said Henry; "not till early the day after; for I shall pass within

ten miles of Clanmore; and I mean to go so far out of my way to visit Mrs. Arundel, whom I have long wished to see."

"Ah, poor Julia Hamilton! Her's is indeed a mournful story. There are some persons, who, though blest with every gift of nature, seem born to be unhappy. I have heard from a friend of mine how she was treated by that monster Arundel; who now, I find, is dead. When I heard they were parted, I was sure that cruel indeed must have been the usage that could have driven her to take such a step. She was devotedly attached to him; and the gentlest of human beings. To a man who has known her as I have, it is very painful to think how completely she has been thrown away.

There is something so melancholy in her story, that I often find myself grieving over it. It is a weakness; for it cannot be helped now. Perhaps she may sometimes think, that, had she married me, I should have known her value better. But—it is more probable she has forgotten that I exist. Such are the changes years and absence produce!" and, as he said this, a deep sigh escaped him. "When you see Mrs. Arundel," continued he, "you may tell her, though I shall never see her again, I shall always remember her with affectionate and painful interest. She is a person it is not easy to forget; though a philosophical student like me has no right to retain so much recollection of past and happier hours."

"You may depend I shall repeat to her all you say, which, I am sure, from the manner in which she spoke of you when I first saw her, will be very gratifying to her. Now, my dear sir, I must leave you, and return home. Let me thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your kindness, which I shall never, never forget."

"Well, Henry, if you must leave me, farewell! Remember all I have said; and let me beseech you not to disregard my advice, till nothing can be done for you. I regret now that I ever made acquaintance with you, for you will leave me a painful remembrance. It is more than probable that you and I shall never meet again. My health will not allow me to expect a long life; and your's, I fear, is even

more precarious. I shall spend many an hour over my winter fire thinking of you, and of the pleasant intercourse we have had together, which now is all at an end. But, wherever you go, do not forget your old friend; and may every blessing attend you!"

As he uttered this, his eyes filled with tears. Henry was too much affected to speak; but his look, as he fervently pressed Mr. Mordaunt's hand in his, spoke volumes of gratitude. He then walked silently out of the room. As he closed the door, Mr. Mordaunt called him back to shake hands with him a second time. The idea that this was a last parting flashed across his mind; and he wished to see his face once more. He gazed after Henry as he crossed the lawn that

led from his house; and, when he lost sight of him among the trees, he felt a thorough conviction he never should see him again.

CHAPTER XX.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o'lang syne?

SCOTCH SONG.

WHEN Henry returned home, he found he had many letters of business to write, and many affairs to settle before he gave up Clare Hall. This occupied his mind, and prevented his indulging in that kind of musing which irritates instead of soothing our feelings. The next day Henry had a most painful office to perform, which was to tell old Benson he could no longer afford to let him live with him.

Had Henry only involved himself in the payment of Lady Matilda's debt, he would have been still in possession of five hundred a year. He could not live upon this at Clare Hall; but it would have been sufficient for him after he had sold his estate. This, however, was far from the case. Since his acquaintance with Lady Matilda began, he had been in the habit of spending considerable sums in presents for her. Jewels, horses, pictures, she had received from him at various times. He might then have been able to indulge in these expenses without much inconvenience; but, in the present reduced state of his income, he was unable to think of any means of paying the debts he had contracted; and he knew, when he re-

turned to London, he should live in perpetual fear of being arrested. He reproached himself bitterly, when he found that, to indulge his wish of gratifying Lady Matilda, he had defrauded others of their lawful due; and he determined, till he had repaid them, to curtail all expenses which were not absolutely necessary.

He sent for Benson; and, when he came into the room, he said, in a hurried manner, "Benson, I must part with you. I need not tell you what it costs me to send away such a faithful old friend; but I am unable to do otherwise."

Benson did not speak for some moments; and then, bursting into tears, he said, "Oh, Master Harry! I never should have thought to hear such words from you. To think that I, who have

so often had you upon my knee, should be turned out of your house; I never expected to see this. I'm sure, Master Harry, you can never have the heart to send away poor old Benson."

"But, my dear friend," said Henry, much touched by the affection the old man shewed him, "what can I do? I am utterly unable to pay you any wages."

"Do you think I've lived with my old master forty years, and hav'nt money enough to keep myself? I'll have none of your's; for I've more money than enough for all I want. Only let me live with you, and be your servant, that I may dress you, and take care of your clothes, as I did when you were a little boy."

Henry was deeply affected by this instance of fidelity in his old servant.

He found himself obliged to yield to his entreaties; though it was with much reluctance he accepted of his services, when he could no longer afford to pay for them. Benson had been so miserable at the thoughts of leaving his master, that now Henry told him he might come to him in London when Clare Hall was given up, he seemed to have forgotten all his misfortunes. Henry then took leave of him, and went to meet the coach that was to take him to London.

As he walked pensively along, many sad thoughts occupied his mind; and something like a foreboding that his schemes of future happiness were visionary, filled his breast with dismal fears. Even in moments of youthful gaiety, when surrounded by his young companions, he had often said he

did not think he should live to be an old man. The weakness of his constitution, the frequent advice of his father to take care of himself, had strongly impressed this idea on his mind; and often it clouded his brow with sadness. Yet still he had looked forward to many happy years; and his lively spirits generally inclined him to banish fears of future evil. But at this moment his apprehensions returned with more than usual force. He felt so weak, so languid, so worn out in mind and body, that he could not divest himself of the idea that his strength was fast giving way. His tendency to consumption exposed him to suffer fatal effects from dissipation and anxiety. The lateness of the hours in London, the constant round of balls and assemblies in which he had been engaged

night after night, and, more than all, the ferment of his mind perpetually harassed by contending hopes and fears, were too much for him; and he now forcibly felt it. But though he was in a very delicate state, he might still, by care, quiet, and peace, have saved himself. Had he been soothed, had his affections been placed on one worthy of him, who would have loved and cherished him, who would have watched over his declining health, he might have lived many long years. But this was not permitted.

When Henry arrived at Clanmore, the little Julia told him her mamma was gone into the village to visit a sick person, but that she would soon return. He amused himself with the children till she came home. When they met, they were mutually struck with the

alteration a few months had made in each other. They were not so conscious of the change in themselves; and Julia looked at Henry with surprise and sorrow; while he beheld her with the same sensations. When he saw her last, her cheek glowed with the most brilliant colour. Now it was deadly white. Her countenance then was all life and animation. Now it had saddened into an expression of calm resignation. She looked like one who had suffered much; who had contended with a wayward fate; and now had submitted to it. She did not wish to live; but she was contented to do so while she could be of use to her children. When she lived in London, in the gayest society, surrounded by those whose thoughts were wholly engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, she

had always devoted a considerable sum to charitable purposes. Since that time, she had been so straitened in circumstances, as to be unable to relieve the wants of the most deserving objects. Now, by strict œconomy in her own expenses, she was enabled to gratify the benevolent feelings of the tenderest heart. The poor of the village of Clanmore looked up to her as an angel; for they found her always ready to pity and relieve them. Her feelings were so acute, that to restore peace to her mind, and to preserve, for the sake of her children, the little health she had left, she found it absolutely necessary to endeavour, as much as possible, to banish all recollections of the past. She therefore kept up no correspondence with any of those she had been in the habit of

associating with; and they were very willing to drop a connexion with one, whose misfortunes now made her only an object of compassion. The sight of Henry at first overset her; and she could hardly speak to him. By degrees she resumed her composure; and she felt pleased he had not forgotten her. He gave her Mr. Mordaunt's message. She only said, "Mr. Mordaunt is very kind to remember me still;" and then turned off the conversation to another subject, and asked no questions concerning him. It was evident that she shrunk from the mention of any one whom she had known intimately while she lived with Mr. Arundel. Henry saw instantly what was passing in Julia's mind; and he talked to her of her children, admired their beauty, and inquired what me-

thod of instruction she intended to pursue with them. She questioned him as to his views. She had heard from one of her former acquaintance, who had lately called upon her, of his attachment to Lady Matilda Sydney, and its unhappy consequences. He now related the particulars of his history; and she grieved to see how much he was still attached to her. Her own misfortunes had so completely changed her views of life, that, when Henry talked to her of the happiness he hoped might be in store for him, she thought he was dreaming. Yet she remembered the time when these views were her's; when she looked to prospects as bright, as visionary, in the fullest confidence that they would be realized —then, she felt for him, and pitied him.

All the expectations, all the sanguine hopes, she had once indulged, had suffered shipwreck. Escaped from the storm, she looked back upon her past life with fear and trembling. Henry was not yet awakened from his dream of happiness. Yet a little while—his hopes would vanish, and their destruction would be total.

Julia warned him not to be the victim of Lady Matilda's artifices. She gave him advice; though she knew, in his present frame of mind, it would be of no use. The time was not yet come when he would attend to it; and, when it did come, it would come too late. He now considered her as a person whose mind was so clouded by disappointment, that she saw every thing through the medium

of a dark imagination; and thought all plans of happiness visionary and romantick.

Late in the evening he took leave of her, and went to the inn at Clanmore. The next day he set off for London.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and uncertain thought
Imagine howling;—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

SHAKSPEARE.

As soon as Henry arrived in London, he hastened to Lady Matilda; determined to have an immediate explanation with her, and to disburthen

his mind of the weight that oppressed it. As he walked along the street, he met the poor man whom he had rescued from famine, coming with his family to thank him for the blessings he had showered upon them. His own distresses had not made him lose sight of their's. He had represented so forcibly to Lord de Montfort the miserable condition of this man, that he promised to let him live in a little farm upon his estate, where he would be able by labour and industry to maintain his family. They were now going to remove thither; and, as they blessed Henry with tears of gratitude, he received, in the sight of their improved looks and happy faces, the reward of his benevolence.

When he reached Lady Matilda's house, he saw the knocker tied up.

After he had rung, and waited some time in the utmost suspense, a servant at last opened the door. "What is the matter with Lady Matilda?" said he impatiently. "Is she ill?"—"Lady Matilda was taken ill of a fever the day you left London, sir; and she has got so bad these two days, that Dr. Pope says she'll certainly die." Henry rushed up stairs. He met Lady Matilda's maid, and implored her to admit him into the room of her mistress, that he might stay with her day and night till she recovered. The woman hesitated at first, saying she was afraid her mistress would be angry with her; but he put a guinea into her hand, which overcame her scruples, and she opened the door for him.

Lady Matilda was in a raging fever. She was quite delirious; and scarcely

could be kept in her bed. While she continued in this state, Dr. Pope gave no hopes of her recovery. Henry could hardly retain possession of his reason, as he listened to her deep groans, and heard her muttering incoherently to herself. In vain he endeavoured to control his feelings; they were too powerful for restraint; and he gave way to the most violent expression of grief. She heard him not; for her senses were entirely gone. Eight days she remained in this state, hanging between life and death. During this time Henry never laid down to rest; and scarcely tasted food. If, exhausted with incessant watching, as he sat in a chair near her bed, his eyes involuntarily closed in sleep, her raving soon roused him again to terror and agony. While he thought she would

not recover, he eagerly hung over her to inhale her feverish breath, that he might not survive her. The bare possibility of being left to exist without her, worked him up to frenzy. But he felt this could not be. Her death at once would seal his fate.

At length the violence of her disorder abated; and she sunk into torpid insensibility. One night after Dr. Pope had examined her pulse, he told Henry he now entertained considerable hopes of her recovery, if she continued in the same state a few days longer. His transports of joy as he heard this, were as vehement as his grief had been. He clasped Dr. Pope's hand, and burst into a flood of tears. Dr. Pope was much affected at the agitated expression of his feelings, and still more at the sight of his death-like

countenance. He gave him some advice, to which Henry paid no attention; and then went into an adjoining room to write a prescription. He thought the door was shut; but Henry had opened it gently to let a little air into Lady Matilda's room. As he stood near her bed, scarcely daring to breathe for fear of disturbing her, he overheard Dr. Pope say to the maid, "I have very little doubt, from the favorable turn Lady Matilda's disorder has taken, that she will be recovered in a month; but it is my opinion that Mr. Ponsonby will not be alive at that time. I never saw a person in a more confirmed decline; and this illness will be his death-stroke. It is impossible he can stand the fatigue of mind and body he has gone through. I told him to nurse himself;

but I did not say much, for it is too late now."

Henry shuddered as he heard these words. He felt weaker and weaker every day. But when he considered what his attendance upon Lady Matilda had been, how many days and nights he had passed without taking rest, he could not be surprised at the effect this had upon him; and he flattered himself, if she were convalescent, care and quiet would restore him.. Now he heard his death-warrant pronounced; and his heart sunk within him. He could well believe the physician's prophecy would prove true; for he felt as if it would be easy to die, and very difficult for him to live. As he watched through the night, and sat over the dying embers of the fire, he was absorbed in regret

and sadness, when he remembered the words of the physician.

"A month hence," thought he, "will all my hopes, my fears be over? Can even death so quench every vital spark, that I shall cease to love her— that I shall no longer think of her? Can it be possible that this warmth of feeling, this ardour of attachment, will be frozen within me,—that I shall become a cold, insensible corpse, to be laid in the earth, and trampled upon by each passing footstep? What can this change be, that will deaden every energy of my soul? Those sanguine hopes of future fame, which glowed within my breast, are now all vanished. My time, my talents, have all been wasted. My name will be buried with me; and I shall be remembered no more!" These thoughts filled his

soul with pain and terror. He tried to sleep, and for a short time forgot himself; but soon he awaked, and the sentence of the physician still sounded in his ear. Through the long dark night, he heard the mournful gusts of wind, and the rain pelting against the window.—"A few weeks hence the wind will blow over my grave—the rain will wet the grass that covers it—and I shall not hear it!" He looked at Lady Matilda's countenance; and, by the light of the lamp, he saw she was in a placid slumber. "She sleeps peaceably," thought he. "She knows not that I am watching by her—that I am dying. Will she forget me? Will she marry another; and be gay and happy after I am dead? How intolerable is that thought! But it cannot be. When her senses are restored;

when she can bear such tidings; I will repeat to her the words of the physician. I will say—I have loved you with the truest, the fondest affection; I have ruined my fortune to save you; I have ruined my health in watching over your's; but for you I would willingly die—and she will never forget me!" The idea that he would thus bind her to him even in death, eased his bursting heart.

The next morning when Dr. Pope called, he found Lady Matilda considerably better. Her pulse was lowered; and her senses seemed returning. He now pronounced her out of danger. Henry sighed as he spoke. She would recover; and, when he saw her restored to health and strength, he must for ever part from her.

When Dr. Pope left the room, he

followed him, and told him he had overheard his opinion of his health. "At my age," said he, "you may suppose life has not lost its charms; but I must submit. Only tell me how long you think I may yet live." Dr. Pope was much shocked; and endeavoured to repair the effects of his inadvertence, by assuring him that he had great hopes he would recover, if he attended solely to his own health. Henry could not believe what he now asserted; and he told him he should not think of leaving Lady Matilda, while she was in so precarious a state. When Dr. Pope found it was in vain to urge him to quit her for his own sake, he said the unexpected sight of him might agitate her, and therefore he advised him, by all means, to leave her before she was sufficiently restored to her

senses to know that he was with her. This argument, joined to his assurance that she was no longer in danger, and that he would let him know every day how she continued, produced the desired effect. Henry left her room; and, with difficulty, reached his lodging.

CHAPTER XXII.

Non fu da indi in quà rider mai visto;
Tutte le sue parole erano meste.

L'Ariosto.

During the coldness that subsisted between Henry and Lady Matilda, Lord Rossmore's acquaintance with her rapidly increased. She courted him by every flattering art; and, though he was incapable of attaching himself seriously to any one, he was so much pleased by her attentions, that he began to think he should not dislike to have for a wife the handsomest woman in London. She saw that she had, in some degree, succeeded in taming his rough,

uncouth manners; and as he would be possessed, after his father's death, of one of the largest fortunes in England, she omitted no opportunity of ingratiating herself with him, in the hope that he would propose to her hereafter to share it. In the prosecution of this scheme she was thoroughly occupied, while Henry abstained from her society. When the Jew from whom she had borrowed, insisted upon immediate payment, she was obliged to have recourse to him for assistance. He had gone too far to recede, had he wished it; but this thought never occurred to him. Her pecuniary distress had involved her so deeply with him, that now she wished to break off their connexion, she knew not how to do it. For a long time she had not imagined he could suppose she would

marry him; and, when she had gone so far that she knew he must think an offer of marriage from him would be accepted, she constantly avoided the subject. By these means she contrived to keep him in suspense, till she had accomplished her purpose. Then she determined to prevent, if possible, having any explanation with him; and, by degrees, to let their intimacy decline. These were her thoughts at the moment he had sacrificed every thing for her, when she loaded him with protestations of gratitude and affection. No man could detect duplicity so masked, or art so deeply laid, and Henry least of all, who rushed headlong into the snare this wretch had spread for him. She did not suppose Lord Rossmore would easily be brought to bind himself to

any woman; and therefore she did not hesitate to keep up Henry's delusion at the time she wanted him.

During his absence she was seized with a violent fever, which, for a time, put an end to her projects. Soon after he had been persuaded by Dr. Pope to leave her, she began to recover rapidly; and, in about a fortnight, she was able to leave her room. From Dr. Pope she heard the whole account of Henry's behaviour during her illness; but she heard it with no emotions of gratitude or pleasure. She knew that her intended marriage with Mr. Ponsonby had long been a matter of common report. Lord Rossmore had frequently hinted at it; and she had taken great pains to persuade him there was no foundation for the ru-

mour, by speaking constantly in the most slighting terms of Henry. Now, when she thought how probable it was that he would hear of her having been nursed by him through her long illness, and how certainly this would at once frustrate her designs upon him, she was full of uneasiness and disappointment. She felt the strongest resentment against Henry for the step he had taken; and resolved to make this a pretence for breaking off all connexion with him; which she now most anxiously wished to do. No emotion of gratitude, of compassion, or affection, made her hesitate. Incapable of any good or honourable feeling, interest was the ruling guide of all her actions; and every means of pursuing it she would willingly adopt.

She determined first to ascertain whether Lord Rossmore were acquainted with Henry's conduct, and what impression it made upon him. For this purpose she wrote a note to him, saying that, as she was now sufficiently recovered to enjoy the company of her friends, she hoped to have the pleasure of seeing him.

Lord Rossmore had, in truth, entertained more serious thoughts of marrying her than she was aware of; and he had made many inquiries about her from Dr. Pope. From him he heard that Henry had never left her room night or day; and that he seemed to consider her as a person, who had every claim upon him a wife could have. Lord Rossmore's rage was ungovernable upon discovering how she

had duped him, when she spoke of his cousin as a common acquaintance, whose attentions were rather irksome to her. Therefore, when he received her note, he answered it in these words.

"Lord Rossmore presents his compliments to Lady Matilda Sydney. As he finds she has so good a nurse in Mr. Ponsonby, he thinks she cannot be in want of his company; and begs, therefore, to decline the honour of paying her ladyship a visit."

Lady Matilda was rather cold and phlegmatic than violent, except on certain occasions. But, when she read this note, and saw that Henry had ruined her prospect of so brilliant an establishment, she was positively furious. From the anger Lord Ross-

more shewed, it was evident that her hopes were nearer being realized than she had supposed; and now they were frustrated by Henry's conduct, her rage against him knew no bounds: She wrote to desire he would come to her instantly, as she must speak to him upon a subject which admitted of no delay. She merely signed her name to this note; and made no inquiry concerning his health.

Since Henry returned to his lodging, he found himself growing weaker every day. He was thoroughly persuaded he should never recover; and his spirits grew more and more dejected. Dr. Pope frequently visited him; and he heard of Lady Matilda's rapid improvement. He began to be surprised that she took no notice of

him in any way. Dr. Pope could not understand what footing they were upon. He thought he had never seen so striking an instance of unamiable coldness and insensibility, as the manner in which she received the account of Henry's unceasing attention to her, during her illness. Though she knew how seriously indisposed he was, she scarcely ever inquired after him. This appeared perfectly incomprehensible to Dr. Pope, who had witnessed his devotion to her; and he carefully concealed it from him. When Henry eagerly inquired what she said of him, and seemed fearful her alarm for his health might injure her own, he could not bring himself to say she had not mentioned his name; and frequently, to satisfy his mind, Dr. Pope delivered

to him messages she had never sent. Thus, for a time, he was not aware of her neglect. When he received her note, he was lost in amazement. She desired him to come to her immediately, as if she were not aware that he had been confined to his room since he left her, and was scarcely able to walk. Could not this be explained by his having desired Dr. Pope not to alarm her about him? Yet she must know that illness alone could have detained him so long from her. It was in vain to form conjectures upon a conduct so inexplicable; and he resolved to go to her, though he was quite unfit to move. Her house was at a short distance; and, by leaning on a stick, he was able to reach it. She heard the slow, weary step of him,

who once flew to meet her, full of spirits, love, and joy—yet she did not relent, or change her purpose.

When he came into the room, almost before he was seated, she attacked him with all the violence of a rage she had been obliged to restrain for some hours. She told him he had acted most dishonourably towards her, in taking a step, while she was in a state of insensibility, which must so fatally affect her views and character in life. She upbraided him with having shewn a total disregard of her reputation; and sacrificed every consideration of her welfare, to a selfish gratification of his own inclinations. She continued giving vent to her passion; while he sat motionless before her, unable to speak. She might have spared him this. A hollow cough

that tore his chest, and almost convulsed his weak frame; the hectic flush of his cheek; the glazed eye, that flashed with an unnatural brilliancy; all told her this harshness was unnecessary to any of her views—that he would atone for his offence by death—that, if she would bear with him a week longer, his love, his hopes, would alike be buried; he would rid her of this incumbrance, and trouble her no more.

For more than ten minutes he did not speak. Then, inarticulately, he said, "You tell me I have ruined your prospects. What are they?" She then mentioned to him her connexion with Lord Rossmore; her plans of marriage; and her fears that they were now overthrown. "Did you then

never love me?" She heard him with the impotent rage of one, whose guilt is detected; and who has nothing to urge in its defence. "If you mean to ask if I ever intended to unite myself to you, I must tell you no such thought entered my mind; and I am surprised at your presumption in supposing that, at any time, I could so undervalue my pretensions, as to think of such a connexion. But now you have not even the means of existence to offer me, I suppose you can hardly be selfish enough to wish that I should sacrifice myself so completely."

"Do *you* tell me this?" said he, in a hollow voice; "then, indeed, I have nothing to regret!" He staggered towards the door with a feeble, uncertain step. She heard him close it for

the last time—she marked the agony of his countenance—nor made one effort to detain him.

As he left her house, he met Lord Rossmore. He stopped him immediately, and explained that Lady Matilda was insensible during the time he had nursed her; that he alone must be answerable for his conduct; that she was deeply offended at it; and that all connexion between them was for ever at an end.

"If that's so," answered Lord Rossmore, "I've been in too great a hurry to break with her. I'll go and tell her so; for she's as handsome a woman as ever I saw. I suppose, after all, it will end in my marrying her." Henry made him no answer; and passed on.

Just as he came within sight of his

lodging, a man touched him on the shoulder; and, shewing him a writ, by which he was empowered to arrest him for a considerable debt, he desired him to pay the money instantly, or go with him to jail. Henry was unable to discharge the bill; and, indifferent whether he died in a prison or not, he followed him thither without expostulation. He could scarcely drag himself along; and was obliged to rest two or three times before they arrived at the jail, which was at some distance. When they reached it, he was shut up in a cold damp room, in which there was no furniture but a mattrass, with scarcely any covering upon it, and a broken table and chair. He had no wish or thought of paying for better accommodation. The burning fever of his mind took from him all regard

to bodily inconvenience; and, had he wanted a better apartment, he could not have procured it at present, as, when the man arrested him, he had only a few shillings in his purse.

CHAPTER XXIII.

What now avails that noble thirst of fame
Which stung thy fervent breast? that treasur'd store
Of knowledge, early gain'd? that eager zeal
To serve thy country, glowing in the band
Of youthful patriots, who sustain her name?
What now, alas! that life-diffusing charm
Of sprightly wit? that rapture for the muse,
That heart of friendship, and that soul of joy,
Which bade, with softest light, thy virtues smile?
Ah! only shew'd to check our fond pursuits,
And teach our humbled hopes that life is vain!

THOMSON.

FOR many hours Henry paced about the room, talking aloud to himself, reproaching Lady Matilda in the bitterest terms, and deploring his miserable fate that had led him into her snares. The keeper, who brought in

a wretched supply of food, stared at him with a mixture of surprise and fear, as he heard him muttering to himself, and saw him strike his forehead with his fist, while he uttered exclamations of rage and despair. At length the supernatural strength, indignation and anguish had given him, was completely exhausted; and he threw himself on the mattrass, unable to stand. In vain he attempted to close his eyes; not for one moment could he forget himself in sleep. After a time, his anger against Lady Matilda was lost in one unceasing throb of pain, when he remembered all the time they had passed together; the devoted love he had shewed her; and the ingratitude with which she had repaid it. But not even now could he so forget his former feelings,

as not to shudder when he thought what a wretched fate she was preparing for herself. She would marry Lord Rossmore. He should not see it. Laid in his grave, no longer would she have power to hurt him. Yet could he think of what her sufferings would be, without an effort to save her? He resolved to exert the little strength he had left, and to write to her. But when, by the dim light of a lantern that was left in his room, he attempted to form his letters, his hand trembled so much, that he could hardly hold his pen. He felt his senses were going. All his ideas seemed confused. Death was approaching with rapid strides. If he did not seize these moments, it would be too late, and all would be over. Again and again he endeavoured to steady his hand; and

at length he traced, indistinctly, these lines.

"I am in a prison, alone, and dying. The keepers only are near me, waiting anxiously for my last groan, that they may plunder me of the little money I have left. Before I knew you, I was gay and happy. Since we have met, every feeling of my soul has been restlessness, suspense, and pain. You ruined my mind, my health, my fortune; and, when you had made me unworthy of you, you hated and despised me. You called my faith in your attachment the delusion of presumptuous vanity. Oh! give it now a gentler name. Say that it was madness—frenzy—love! I wish not to reproach you: I know not what I write. All my senses are injured; and every thought is confused. But, recollect, *you* have brought me to

this state: I was not always thus—then, *you* should pity me. There is one thing I would say to you before I die. I would not be remembered by you with abhorrence; as one who had blasted all your hopes. Therefore I satisfied Lord Rossmore, that, from the impulse of my own heart, I had watched over you day and night while you were insensible; and that, when you were restored to reason, you reproached, you detested me for it. But, though I could not rest till I had done this, let me entreat you not to unite your fate to his. Do not suppose that envy of his happiness impels me to say this. I never was guilty of so base a feeling: and now, with me, all contentions are over. I cannot be the rival of any man. No man can interfere with my prospects; for a grave alone

is open to me—and no one can withhold me from it. But I know the madness of his fury. His brutal violence will break even *your* heart. Consider this as the warning of a dying friend—of him who prays for your happiness with his latest breath. May you be happy with some one who will love and cherish you!--not as I have done; for where again will you meet with one who would live and die for you? Let me be your last victim: let my death satisfy you: and do not hereafter sport with the feelings of those by whom you are beloved. They will not love you with a love like mine—and yet they may be very, very wretched. You know not what it is to love—but I have felt the pang of disappointment; and perhaps *your* heart might ache, could you know

what mine has suffered. I wish not to hurt you. I have no anger against you. All resentment is over. In a few hours a whole world will separate us. You will then have no power over me. I shall be laid in the dust —and even your love, your voice, can never rouse me from that dull, cold sleep. Oh! you would not wish to do so! The cold contempt, the bitter scorn, you shewed me when we parted, all assure me that my death will be to you as that of any indifferent person; that, when I am removed from your sight, you will never, never think of me again. Yes—a month, a week hence, I shall be to you as if I had never existed; and you will have forgotten that we ever met! This is that thought, that goading thought, which burns within me day and night; and

will not suffer me to rest—which, even in the agonies of death, will rack my soul, and sharpen the pain of dying."

He wrote the name of Lady Matilda Sydney on the back of this letter; then placed it in his bosom; and sunk back upon his couch, exhausted with the effort he had made. For many hours he could not keep in one posture; he tried to ease his mind and body by incessant motion, and every attempt to sleep was vain.

After a night passed in restless agony, towards the morning he fell into a heavy, lethargick slumber. In dreams his mind wandered confusedly over past events. Again he found himself surrounded by his friends; engaged in scenes of festivity; admired, happy, and beloved. At one moment he seemed to be conversing

with his father: he saw his countenance beam with paternal fondness, as he bestowed upon him the praise he had so often deserved. This vision disappeared; and he found himself in a crowded drawing-room with Lady Matilda; who, surrounded by admirers, seemed to speak, to look, to smile but for him. Again all vanished—and he was left wandering among steep precipices, which threatened destruction on every side.

When he awoke, he was no longer agitated; his feelings were palsied; and scarcely a consciousness of his situation remained. His frame, weakened by protracted disease, unable to contend with the violent passions that racked his mind, had sunk exhausted in the conflict; and now gave signs of approaching dissolution. As he lay

extended on the miserable mattrass that had been placed for him upon the floor, the wind howled mournfully through a little grated window, which admitted a dim light, that served to shew the desolation of the room. A few green sticks had been piled up in the grate; and, after some vain attempts had been made to kindle them into a flame, they were left there, and gave no signs of warmth but the smoke that issued from them. The coarse food that had been brought to him, was left untasted on the table. But to all these inconveniences Henry was now insensible. He felt no cold—no hunger—no rage—no despair. All his powers of bodily and mental suffering were in a manner suspended. A stupid apathy hung over him: and, though he had a confused sensation

that some heavy calamity pressed upon him—that he was alone, dying, without one friend to speak kindly to him—he had not strength to think over the particular circumstances that had brought him to this state, or to recollect who had ruined him, and for what cause.

After he had remained some hours in this situation, he was suddenly roused by a well-known voice, crying out, in a tone of the greatest impatience, "Where *is* he? where is he? let me see him:" and scarcely had these words reached his ears, when Benson burst into the room, and, flinging himself across the bed, exclaimed, in an agony of tears, "Oh, Master Harry! do I see you here?" These sounds recalled Henry's wandering senses; and, as he raised his

head, and his eyes rested on the face of his faithful old servant, surprise and joy lighted them up with a ray of their former brilliancy. It was a bright, fading light—that vanished instantly into total darkness!—"My dear friend," said he, in a voice scarcely articulate, "I am glad you are come. You will stay with me till I am dead; and then, you will not leave me a prey to the rapacious hands of strangers. The thought of being left to the unfeeling stare of every brutal keeper of this prison, affects me far more than it ought. It will be a comfort to me in dying, to know I have one friend near me."—"Do not talk so, do not talk so," said the old man, sobbing like a child. "I will run for a physician. You will recover; and be as gay and happy as when you lived with your

dear father."—"Do not speak of my father. I must not think of him—of any one who ever loved me;" and, as he uttered this, tears forced their way down his pallid cheek. Benson scarcely heard these words; and hurried out of the room to find a physician.

As he hastened through the street, looking to the right and left in hopes of seeing the name of some medical person on a door, that of Dr. Blake caught his eye. He rung violently; and, as the servant opened the door, Dr. Blake was crossing the hall. "Oh! Sir, come, or he will die before you can help him."—"Who are you talking of?" said Dr. Blake, startled at the vehemence of the man, who had seized his hand, and was pulling him forcibly towards the door. "Oh, my young master is in a jail, very ill.

Come with me directly; or I don't know what may happen, if you are so long getting to him." Dr. Blake was a most benevolent man: the venerable appearance of the old servant, joined to the impetuosity and earnestness of his entreaties, struck him very much; and he followed him without delay.

When they reached the prison, Dr. Blake desired the keeper to admit him into the apartment of the young man who was ill; as he was a physician, and was come to visit him.

"You're welcome to go up if you please, sir," said the man, in a surly, unfeeling tone; "but 'tis not a bit o' use. It's all expense for nothing. There he kept on half the night talking to himself, just for all the world like a crazy man. 'Twas my belief

he was touched in his brain; and I didn't half like to go near him. But now he's quiet enough; and when I went in but now, to see what was come of him, he didn't speak, or move hand or foot. The youth must die now, let it be how 'twill." Dr. Blake, turning from him with disgust, ordered him, in an authoritative tone, to do as he desired; and, after some doors had been unlocked, and he had gone through many dark passages, he found himself in Henry's room.

"My young friend," said he, in the kindest tone, as he sat down on a chair near him, "I am come to see what I can do for you. I hope I shall be able to set you up again." As he spoke, Henry grasped his hand—it was a burning, feverish touch, that at once silenced all hope. Dr. Blake felt he

was talking of impossibilities. A considerable accession of fever had come on in the last hour; and had succeeded to the death-like languor, which had overpowered him before the arrival of Benson. This gave him a kind of deceitful strength, that enabled him to raise himself, and to speak more intelligibly. The old man saw in this a change for the better. To Dr. Blake it appeared in a very different light; and, as he gazed upon the countenance of Henry, he beheld death stamped in strong characters on every altered feature. He felt certain that no medical skill; no earthly power, could ever restore to health and strength that pale, emaciated form. Yet, seeing Henry's mind was as much disordered as his body, he attempted to cheer him, and to inspire him with that hope

which he himself could not feel. He told him he should not give way to despondency; that much might be expected from his youth, aided by medical assistance. "Sir," said Henry, "I cannot thank you for your kindness as I would wish. The hand of death, whose fast approach I feel in every limb, arrests my tongue, and will not give me time. Your medical aid comes too late; but if it were powerful enough to overcome my disorder, yet," added he, laying his hand upon his heart, "there is something here that would not let me live. My strength will not permit me to tell you my story; and it would now be useless. There is one favour I would request of you, which I feel sure you will not refuse me. After I am dead," continued he, drawing a letter from his bosom,

"will you deliver this into the hands of the person to whom it is directed? You may read it yourself; and you will then know something about me." Dr. Blake, with tears in his eyes, promised to comply with his request. Henry took his hand; and, pressing it fervently between his, said, in a hoarse, low voice, "When you are upon your death-bed, remember what you once did for a friendless, miserable wretch—and die happy!" As he uttered these words, his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth; his throat grew dry; his eye was fixed; he struggled for breath—and fell back. For some moments Dr. Blake doubted whether death had actually taken place. He laid his hand on Henry's heart—it had ceased to love—to ache—to beat.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Thou art gone!—thy genius fled up to the stars from whence it came;—and that warm heart of thine, with all its generous and open vessels, compressed into a clod of the valley.

STERNE.

THE grief of Benson was violent and frantick, when he found Henry was dead. He flung himself upon the body, declaring he would not be torn from it; that he would watch by it day and night, till it should be laid in the earth. The third day it became necessary to place it in a coffin, as it gave every sign of decay. Dr. Blake called in the morning to see the old

servant; and as he stood in the passage waiting till the keeper had unlocked the door, he heard frequent knocking, and asked him from whence the noise proceeded.

"It's nothing at all," answered the man; "only I suppose they're nailing down the coffin of the young gentleman you came to see t'other day. I told you he was sure to die; and now you see who's right."

The coarse brutality of this speech shocked Dr. Blake beyond expression; and, when he entered the room, and saw Henry laid in his coffin, his face overspread with the dark, livid hue of death, which now had lost every trace of former beauty, he could not refrain from shedding tears. Benson was sitting in the room, with his eyes fixed

on the coffin. There was something peculiarly affecting in the steady calmness that had succeeded his frantick grief. It was evidently the result of a firm persuasion that he could not survive his master; and this idea seemed to have reconciled him to a separation, which he felt would be but short. Dr. Blake offered to take him home with him. "It's of no consequence, sir," said he mournfully, "what becomes of me. I can't remain behind long. Now Master Harry's gone, I have nothing to do here."

The next day Henry was carried to the grave that was dug for him in a church-yard not far from the prison: his body was deposited in the dust; and he, whose talents had excited ad-

miration unmixed with envy,—for what heart could envy one of so gentle a nature?—whose breast had glowed with every noble, generous feeling, was consigned to everlasting oblivion. That voice, whose manly eloquence had seldom failed to persuade, was now lost in perpetual silence—those features, whose beauty had been heightened by the soul that gave them animation, were now a prey to worms and loathsome reptiles. The gap which his absence had occasioned among his gay companions, was soon filled up by a new favorite: and an occasional exclamation, "What a good fellow Harry Ponsonby was!" alone shewed that any recollection of his ever having existed remained amongst them.

After the funeral, Dr. Blake, accord-

ing to his promise, called upon Lady Matilda Sydney, to deliver the letter Henry had left for her. He found her playing upon the harp to an admiring audience. "Lady Matilda," said he, in a firm voice, "Mr. Ponsonby, who died a few days ago in prison, desired I would deliver this letter to you. If you have any heart—this will break it." Saying these words, he threw the letter upon the table, and walked out of the room.

Days, months, years, rolled away. Lady Matilda, flattered, followed, and admired, sought a refuge from thought in publick places, balls, and assemblies. Yet, amidst the folly and flattery that surrounded her, the thought of Henry Ponsonby would sometimes cross her mind, and pierce her cold, proud heart

with a thrill of agony. In vain she tried to stifle the reproaches of conscience, by repeating to herself that she could not be answerable for the evils his attachment to her had drawn upon him—it was insufficient. When she remembered his powers of mind, his acute feelings, his ingenuous and amiable disposition, the attraction of his manners, the beauty of his countenance, and compared him to the frivolous, selfish beings she daily associated with, his existence seemed but a lovely dream. Four years after his death she married Lord Rossmore. He soon taught her to repent of her choice. She suffered every torment that his violence and tyranny could inflict, and his brutal treatment wrung from her tears of rage and despair.

Then, indeed, she recalled with sharp and bitter regret, the tenderness and fond devotion of him, whose prospects, once fair and flourishing, she had blighted—whose heart her base duplicity had broken—whose death she must one day answer for!

THE END.

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